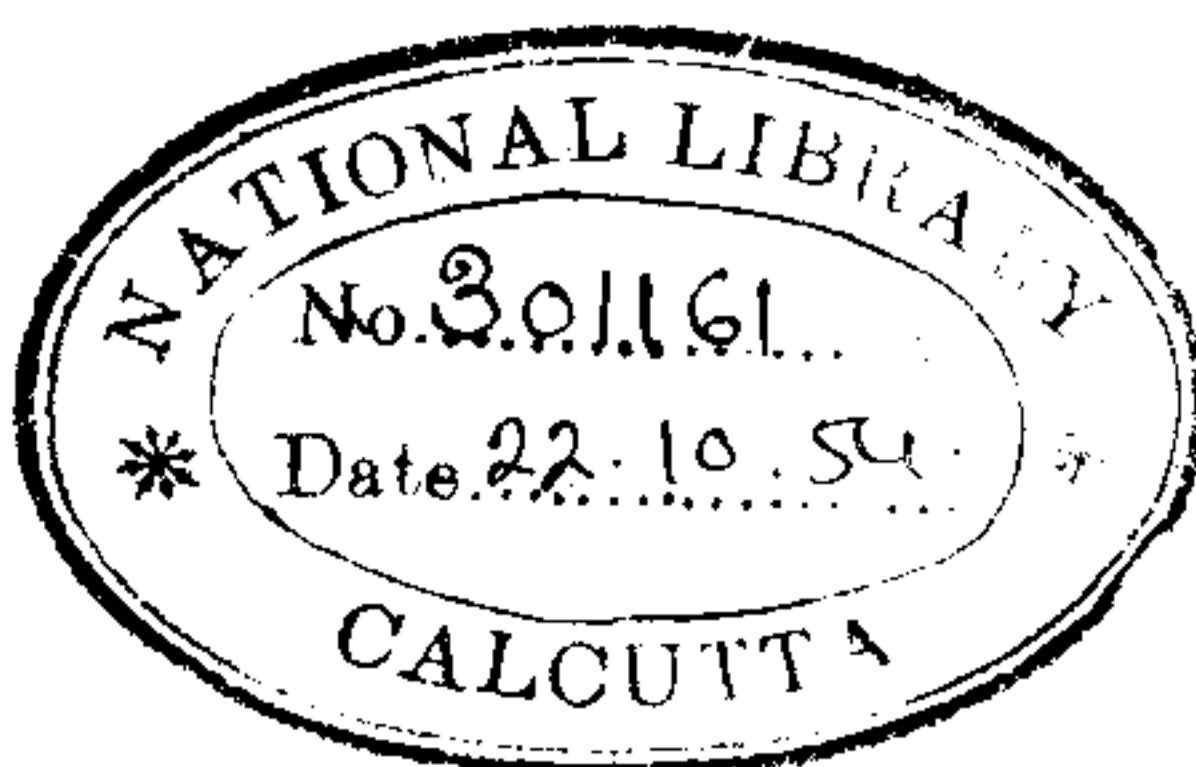


# PEACE THROUGH THE AGES

TRANSLATIONS FROM  
THE POETS OF CHINA



Translated and Published  
by Rewi Alley  
Peking, China, 1954

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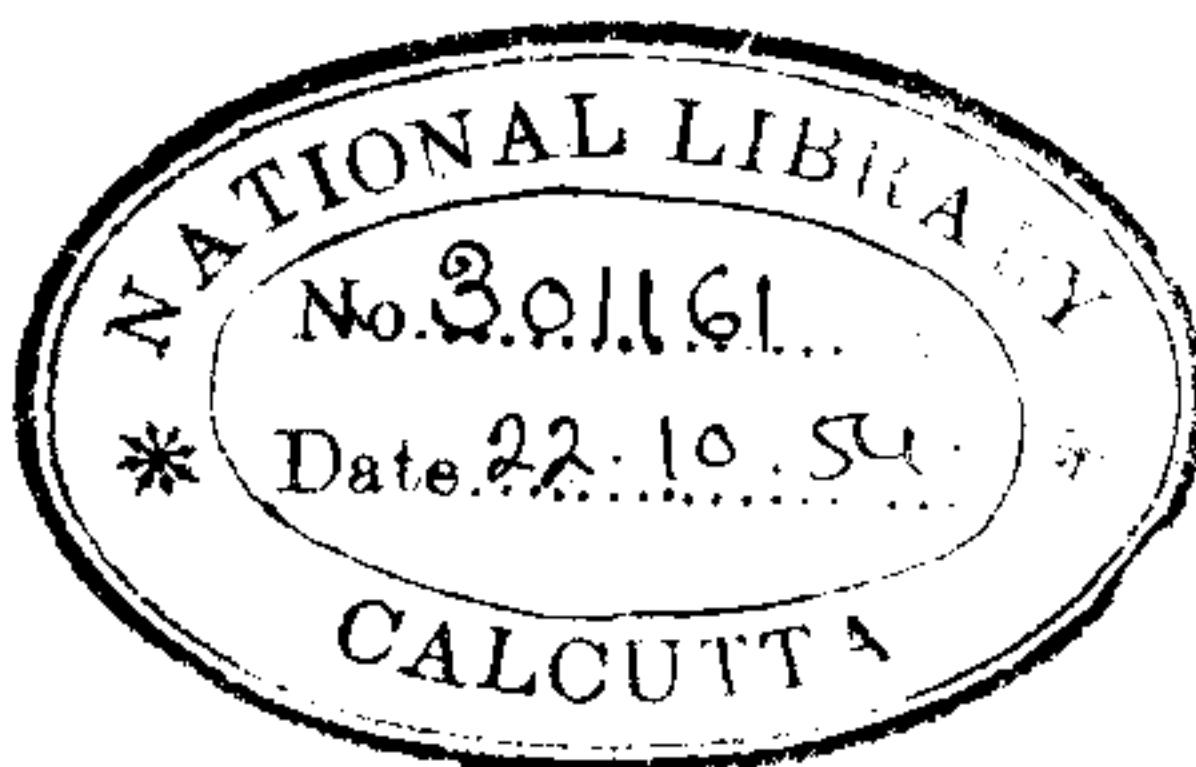
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# PEACE THROUGH THE AGES

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## PREFACE

*The average person does not have much time to delve through libraries looking for translations of Chinese poetry. Yet, for those who would understand China, it will be good to know something of what has been written. Poetry has been the medium of expression for many people through the long ages of Chinese history. English translations in their attempts to introduce an oriental effect, have stressed the quaint, the different. The translator in this case has tried to stress the central message of each poem.*

*The poems in this book have been arranged in chronological order, and freedom has been taken in changing the original titles for some of them.*

*Really, almost all the poetry of China, which has come down to us through the ages, is peace poetry. Its humanism, its love of nature, breathe peace in almost every line. Giants like Chu Yuan, Li Pai,\* Tu Fu, Pai Chu-yi, who so surely rank amongst the great poets of all time, make of peace a central point. As one studies them, one comes to love them and to realize better the intensity of the people's longing for peace that they have so clearly expressed.*

*The work of translation has been done from the original manuscripts, with the help of many ordinary people, who have come in and out during the time the work was being done. One friend has suggested this poem, someone else another. Searching for one set of*

\*Also known as Li Po.

*lines has led to the discovery of others. A haphazard method, perhaps; but one that has suited the mood of the translator.*

*I am very grateful for the valuable editing assistance of Shirley Barton, the criticism and suggestions of Yang Hsien-yi, Chu Kwang-tsien, and other friends. I have no claim to be a sinologue—simply one who is fascinated by the immense wealth, variety and true richness of China's cultural heritage in the realm of poetry, which has inspired me with the desire to help others know of it also. The present work is really a collective effort; and the urgency of the struggle for peace is the reason for the selection of those lines which have most to do with that subject.*

*The illustrations chosen are some which have come down through the ages and which breathe a spirit of peace and culture.*

Rewi Alley  
October 25, 1953

**PERIODS OF  
CHINESE HISTORY**

Shang (or Yin) Dynasty . . . . .	1766-1066 B.C.
Chou Dynasty . . . . .	1066-403 B.C.
The Warring States . . . . .	403-221 B.C.
Chin Dynasty . . . . .	221-207 B.C.
Han Dynasty . . . . .	206 B.C.-220 A.D.
Three Kingdoms . . . . .	220-264
Tsin Dynasty . . . . .	265-419
Northern and Southern Dynasties . . . . .	420-589
Sui Dynasty . . . . .	581-617
Tang Dynasty . . . . .	618-907
The Five Dynasties . . . . .	907-960
Sung Dynasty . . . . .	960-1279
Mongol (or Yuan) Dynasty . . . . .	1280-1368
Ming Dynasty . . . . .	1368-1644
Manchu (or Ching) Dynasty . . . . .	1644-1911
The Republic of China . . . . .	1912-1949
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## I. EARLIEST TIMES. CHOU DYNASTY 1066-403 B.C.

*Towards the end of the Chou dynasty, about the time of Confucius, who died in 475 B.C., the first collection was made of people's poems and songs, and called "Shih Ching," the "Book of Odes."*

*The nine poems of this section are all taken from "Shih Ching."*

*Some of these poems and folk-songs undoubtedly go back a very long way, perhaps into the period of Shang (1766-1066 B.C.) or even earlier.*

*From them emerge very clearly and consistently the deep desire of the people for peace and their resentment at being involved in the military adventures of various feudalist groups. From the earliest times the distinction is drawn between the aggressive war—to further the selfish ambition of this or that person or group—and the defensive war to protect the people's homes and lives against aggression.*

*The cradle of Chinese civilization in the Chou dynasty was in the area covered today by the Honan and Shensi Provinces.*



*ANONYMOUS*

## SOLDIERS OF WEI

Drums gave the call to war  
so we sprang to arms; some  
were left to work  
on fortifications; others  
to till, while we were singled out  
to march southward;

Sun Tse-chung, our lord, has made  
peace with Chen and Sung; but even yet  
we cannot return, so hearts are heavy;

some were wounded, some were killed  
horses were lost; where are  
these men, these horses? Seek for them  
in the woods where they lie  
untended;

when leaving, to our wives we swore  
for ever would we be faithful; then  
clasping hands we pledged, that until old age  
would we live together;

now for us this war  
comes to a tragic end  
our vows have we broken  
and gained only bitterness.

## WAR HAS TAKEN MY HUSBAND

War  
has taken my husband;  
will he get permission  
to see his home again?  
In despair I wonder —

Oh my man, why must it be  
you cannot come?

Evening falls;  
chickens are going to rest;  
down the hill  
come cattle and sheep.

War  
has taken him, holds him  
so  
of what else can I think?

My man  
has gone to war. It's not  
just a matter of going, then,  
in a few days, a few months,  
coming back —  
oh, will there never be an end to war?

And now the chickens are asleep;  
the cows and sheep are in the yard;  
everything is here, everything except  
he who would give it all meaning—my husband!  
for you may there be no hunger,  
no thirst. -



The Garden of Literature

by Han Huang

THE GARDEN OF LITERATURE was painted by Han Huang (723-787), a skilled painter of portraits, cattle and horses in the Tang dynasty (618-907). This painting is a study in contemplation of four literati in their hour of composition. On the upper left of the picture the calligraphy of Chao Chi, emperor of the Sung dynasty who reigned 1101-1125, shows the painting to have been at one time in the possession of the Sung emperors.

THE GARDEN OF LITERATURE (64.5 x 37.5 cm.) is now in the Palace Museum, Peking.

## BACKWATERS

I look at the still waters  
held behind the dam, see  
wood floating but unable  
to move down stream;

our chief stays safely at home  
but sends us to guard at Shen,  
homesick am I, when shall I return?

A bramble blown into the water  
lies on the surface, immovable;

our chief stays safely at home  
but sends us to guard at Fu,  
homesick am I, when shall I return?

A bundle of reeds  
comes to a halt on  
the still pond;

our chief stays safely at home  
but sends us to guard at Hsu,  
homesick am I, when shall I return?

## YOUNG SOLDIER THINKS OF HOME

I climb a barren hill and ponder  
over my folk at home, thinking  
of my father

how he will be wondering about me  
saying to everyone he meets,  
"My boy is away **at the war**  
with little rest by day or night. I hope  
he takes care of himself, and  
is back soon. Can't get him  
out of my mind";

then of my mother and of what  
she will be saying—

"My child  
is a soldier now—no sleep  
day or night; oh, that he  
would take care and come  
home, not leaving his body  
in such far places";

then I climb further  
and think of my brother

how he will be explaining  
"My brother is away fighting;  
struggling day and night; he must  
return to us, alive."

## HOME FROM WAR

We marched to the eastern front  
and there we stayed, never getting  
orders to return; then at last  
in the autumn rains they came, so  
in the drizzle we set off home again

everyone excited, saying thankfully,  
"No more marching,  
no more wearing of gags!"\*

so we made our way back, at nights  
rolled in our bedding  
sleeping under the carts  
for shelter, thinking of how cosily  
silkworms lie together, in  
the mulberry season;

with thoughts already home  
wondering if houses were desolate  
with wood-lice and spiders, or wild deer  
amongst the gardens; then thoughts  
of loved ones crowding in on us;

and as for the women folk, they waited,  
watching the cranes a-screaming  
as they rose from the anthills, expecting  
that each alarm meant their men  
were coming, then saying how it would be  
best to get the rooms swept clean,  
for those returning had suffered much  
in these three years;

so did we at last come in  
finding all prepared; and great  
was the jubilation; the sun came out  
the birds flashed past; the girls  
rode out to be married, decked up  
by their mothers and on their pretty  
ponies; marriages were good, yet  
not giving so deep a joy as did

\*In these times soldiers wore gags over their mouths to enforce silence.

the reunions of couples separated  
for so long.

## ANXIETY

Autumn, and the big pear tree  
is bright with fruit; I look  
and think of my husband, gone  
to be a soldier;

whatever the King wants, I must  
not stint, even though the term  
of service has expired, and my heart  
is wounded, knowing of his need  
for rest and care;

winter goes, and then the pear tree  
comes into full leaf again; and still  
I understand that whatever the King would have  
he must have, even though my tears  
cannot be controlled, for now

with all the world bursting  
into new life, would I  
throw off my sorrow, and welcome  
him home again;

summer, and I climb the northern hills  
to pick wild fruit, and grieving know  
the King must be strictly obeyed, even  
if our hearts at home are breaking;

I look and think I see his cart  
with four horses; look again  
and know that it is but a dream  
come from my anxious brain;

time passes, and one feels perhaps  
they have not left the front; no  
news, so that fears set in and I go

for help to the oracle bones\*  
which say, fortune is clear  
and I take heart believing  
my loved one will soon be near.

### WILD GEESE

A great beating of wings and the wild geese  
stream onward over the wilderness

as we in the bad old days were led  
on to fruitless wars; the labour of our hands lost  
in empty struggle.

Wild geese in their flight come down to rest  
on the still waters of the lake.

Today our men raise up long walls  
only for protection, shelter; working  
their hardest, tired, yet happy that now they  
can make their homes in peace.

\*Oracle bones: In the very early days these were means of telling fortunes.

The geese utter long plaintive cries as they fly away.

And now our leader, wise and sympathetic,  
understands our work in all its bitterness,  
unlike the foolish ones of old who thought  
of our requests as insolence.

### ROCKS LOOK DOWN

Sheer crags along the road  
frown in their silent might;  
tiredly we wend our way in file  
over mountain passes, through streams,  
ever eastward; the order never comes  
to rest.

And as we go forward the rocks  
look always more forbidding,  
difficulties of the march  
harder to surmount; wearily  
plodding forward, a soldier knows  
that with no command there can be  
no retreat.

While all around are signs  
of more and heavier rain  
so that a thorough drenching  
is the best we can hope for.

## GRASS WITHERS\*

Grass withers and likewise we,  
marching incessantly, also  
lose our strength, yet always  
new marches are planned.

In spring  
the grass grows green again  
while we, grass widowers,  
made into soldiers, are seen  
as less than men.

Why should we live  
as do the wild animals, on  
desolate hills, moved here, moved there,  
day and night, not men,  
just armies?

Now we leave the long grass  
envious even of the foxes  
dragging their tails in freedom  
while we alongside the carts  
stamp down the highway, ever  
to war.

\*The poet refers to the time, perhaps, when the Chou dynasty was disintegrating and armies fought losing battles everywhere. There is a sharp longing for peace and home.



## II. THE HAN DYNASTY 206 B.C.-220 A.D.

*The Han dynasty followed the great centralization of power during the short-lived Chin dynasty which came between the Han and the former Chou period in which Confucius lived.*

*The Han dynasty was a time of great advance economically and culturally. The silk from the Han Empire went over the roads of Central Asia to the empire of the Romans. Pastoral peoples along the routes grew in numbers and, led by military adventurers, would try to gather harvest from the agricultural and trading Chinese. Feudal Chinese militarists would embark on war adventures also, with the result that the common man on both sides paid in blood.*

*There were many pastoral tribal peoples — the Yueh Chih who finally went west, the Hsiung Nu, a branch of whom went to Europe and were known as the Huns, the Chiang and the Jung, who were probably assimilated into China, as others.*



**ANONYMOUS**

### **THE NIGHT OF PARTING**

Married at the proper age,  
our love for each other has never ceased  
and in our full joy together tonight  
came that depth of happiness we would have  
last for ever;

yet as a soldier must I think  
of the long road before me; so  
in the night I arose, and seeing  
the morning star had gone, left  
the bed of my beloved, to march  
to war, never knowing when return  
will be possible; we clasp hands  
together, and oh! that last long sigh,  
that last farewell, our faces  
wet with tears;

hold to your everlasting youth,  
my wife; never forget the great hours  
we had together; no question that  
should I live I shall return to you  
and if I die then let me live  
long in your memory.

## THE OLD SOLDIER RETURNS

Fifteen, and I left to be a soldier;  
discharged when old and useless, I  
started to stumble home.

Back in our village, I asked  
who lived now in my old house?

Then they pointed, saying,  
“Look, away over there is your place—  
that mound surrounded by pines  
and cypresses.

“It’s quite deserted; rabbits run  
out from all the holes; pheasants  
whirr from the beams of the roof;

“and in the yard wild grain grows  
and there are herbs by the well.”

So I went to see what was my home  
and there I boiled up some grain  
made a soup of the herbs; then  
went out of the door, looking  
over to the east, wondering  
whom to call to eat with me;

soon tears began to fall,  
dampening my clothes.

## THE DEFEAT

South of the city, then  
all the way to the north  
we fought and were killed;  
crows pecked at the unburied  
corpses;

to those crows, and to our heroes  
we said

“Our dead are scattered; we are sorry  
that the rotting flesh, unburied,  
must be left to the birds”;

for we had to flee  
through the marshes  
together with the deep water  
that rustled through dark reeds;

and covering our withdrawal  
horsemen fought valiantly  
while riderless mounts of the killed  
galloped to and fro, neighing.

In our flight we came  
to a bridge, remembering  
that near it had been built  
a house; wondering, was it  
up on the bank to the north  
or was it to the south?

Food became  
the next problem, but  
how could food be found  
with none bringing in the harvest?

We have been loyal to protect  
the safety of our lord,  
yet now this has come upon us.  
My lord,  
my lord,  
who thinks for us all!

In the morning we were sent to attack;  
evening came; but none returned.

### THE SOLDIER HUSBAND

I can see you marching, ever  
steadily marching; it seems  
we shall always be separated  
with thousands of miles between us,  
each of us on opposite sides  
of the horizon.

With no clear road  
and the way so long, there is  
no knowing when we shall be  
face to face again.

Like a tribesman's horse  
you have become used to the frontier;  
I, like a bird on a southern tree,  
know only my home.

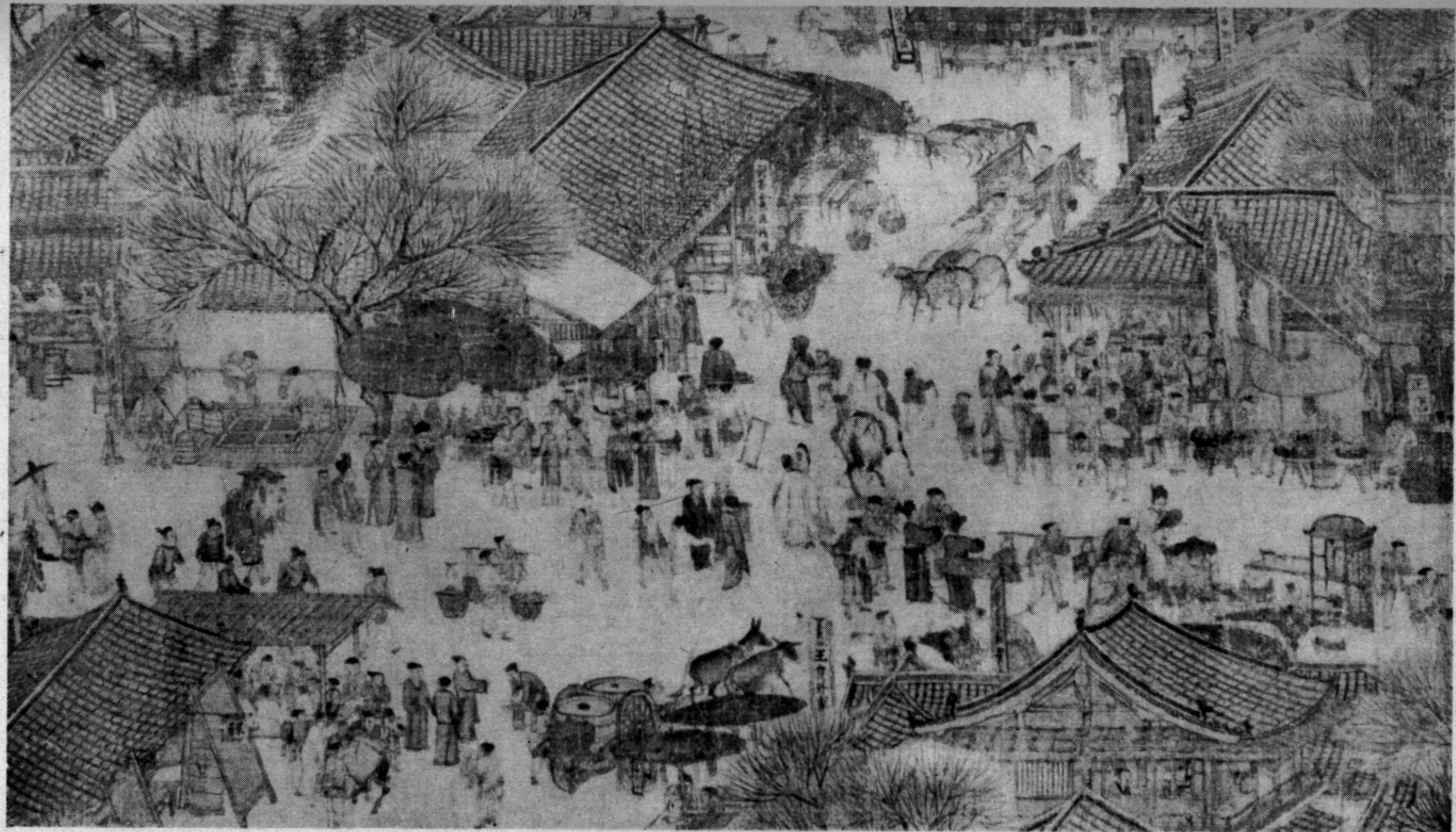
You have been gone so long  
and I have become so thin  
my clothes are loose.

A floating cloud obscures the sun  
the soldier should not think of return;  
yet longing for you has made me old;  
it seems that you really mean to leave me  
so I shall say that it matters not; eating  
my food, I shall strive simply  
to keep alive.

TSAI YUNG

FOR HIM—WATERING HIS HORSE BY THE  
GREAT WALL

Green, so green is the grass  
along the river banks;  
long, so long the road  
winding away from me to where  
you stand; yet thoughts  
like these must I push from me  
though in my dreams they return  
persistently  
only to leave me, waking, with the truth  
that you are gone indeed to a far place  
and there is no hope of seeing you;  
now  
the mulberry trees are dry and bare in the  
bitter wind; the sea shows its coldness,  
to all other houses friends come  
and go, saying pleasant things  
to one another; but I remain desolate until  
one comes bringing  
a letter, written on silk,  
and hands it  
to me so that I  
rise to my knees from the mat  
eagerly to receive it  
saying, "And what is in this letter?"  
and finding the answer,  
"You must take care  
of yourself and forget  
me."



Springtime in the Eastern Capital

by Chang Tse-tuan



This painting by Chang Tse-tuan, court artist during the Northern Sung dynasty (960-1127), depicts that dynasty's eastern capital (present-day Kaifeng). The whole scroll (525 x 25.5 cm.) portrays quiet villages, the city highway and the busy market place. This is a section of the scroll portraying the market.

The original painting is in the Palace Museum, Peking.

### III. THE WEI, TSIN, NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN DYNASTIES

220-617

*After the end of the Han dynasty, up until the founding of the Tang—from 220 until 617, there was a period of considerable suffering for the people of China. There were reigning houses in both North and South China. In the North, Wei Tartars and others set up courts and fought the Southern dynasties who were south of the Yangtze, with their capital at Nanking.*

*Little wonder, then, that the poetry of this period shows a longing for peace, and a desire to return to the happier times of the past.*

*The literati of the South maintained the Chinese tradition, which was to flower again and again in the succeeding generations. Tao Chien, one of the great poets, wrote of a Utopia that had been able to escape war, and live in happiness.*

*In the sixth century, towards the end of this era, the whole of China was united once more. The Sui emperors centralized power, and after a short-lived rule, gave way to a great period of stability and creativeness that marked the beginnings of the Tang dynasty.*



## WAR IN CHANG-AN CITY

Chang-an in utter confusion  
as though wolves and tigers had been  
let loose; and I turned into a refugee  
seeking to escape from my own country  
to the borders of another; my home sad  
and bitter that I must go; my friends wishing  
to escape with me.

Leaving the city  
one saw nothing, for the horror of the surroundings  
blotted out all else; everywhere  
the white bones of the dead were  
scattered and on the roads were starving women  
putting the children they could not feed  
into the grass to die;  
the abandoned child cries, yet the mother  
dare not turn her head, though herself  
shedding tears, saying she knew not where  
she would die herself, and surely both  
could not keep alive; and I, rather than  
listen to such bitter words, goad my horse  
along faster;  
on the South I climb to Pa Ling,\* looking  
back at Chang-an; then, thinking of the good king

\*Pa Ling is the place where Emperor Wen of the Han dynasty was buried. His reign was noted for peace and prosperity, but his successor, Emperor Wu, started wars and plunged the country into misery. In paying a tribute to Emperor Wen, the poet was indirectly showing his disapproval of his successor.

who lies there, long with a broken heart  
for the sweet days of peace.

### SONG OF BITTER COLD

Out there in the north are great distances;  
a wild place, full of danger and difficulty  
where one bends the head to find a way  
through broken valleys; then stiffens the back  
to climb tall mountains where lie perpetually  
thick ice and snow over a vast expanse;

at times clouds gather, blotting out everything  
and the wild winds howl mournfully through  
the forest trees; here we cannot see the light  
of day or any of the homely scenes we love;  
just hear the screech of mountain birds, the cry  
of tigers in the dense woodlands,  
the moaning of great apes on the rocks;

each evening we gather at the foot of a tree  
to sleep, each day brings some fresh misery;  
thirsty, we take ice to drink,  
hungry, we have to wait until the dew  
begins to appear; homesick we have none to tell  
of our sufferings, either by day or night;

to be a soldier is of all things  
most bitter; how can a human being stand  
this everlasting cold and hardship?

## ENLISTING

Bitter is the lot of a soldier, blown  
with the winds everywhere; south  
over the great ranges; north to the Long Wall\*—  
all tumbled hills and valleys with  
bottomless chasms; and now the hills rise up  
in front of us, making us struggle, weighted  
with arms, to climb them; then down to sandy rivers  
using all our strength against the fierce flow;  
in summer we march under the scorching sun  
but when the wind turns cold our sharpest pains  
are in crossing the rivers; in summer even the pools  
we bathe in are hot; in winter they are covered  
with thick ice; the horsemen of the enemy  
come in like dense clouds, their banners  
a net of stars; weapons glint and then clash  
against weapons without cease; then in the morning  
we cannot take off our armour, and at night  
must hold arms in readiness; bitterness is always  
with us soldiers,  
from one hardship to a worse.

\*The "Long Wall" is the Great Wall.

## TAO CHIEN

### PEACH BLOSSOM SPRINGS

*In a beautifully worded prose preface to this poem, Tao Chien describes a Utopia—surely one of the earliest of Utopias—where people who had been able to escape from wars were living in happy seclusion. He describes how a man of Wu Ling went up a stream into the mountains and then came to a place where the banks were lined with peach trees in bloom, with grassy banks below them. He went on, and then through a crack in the mountains came through into a most fertile and beautiful country. The people had been there for five hundred years, and had not known of the rise and fall of the Han dynasty, even. They asked the man not to talk about them, but when he returned to the outside world, he reported the matter to the local official, who tried to find the way in to the fastness, but failed.*

*This great peace poem had a big influence on poets of later periods, showing men how much happiness could come when people could live free from war.*

From the wars and chaos of Chin\*  
those who would preserve true values  
sought escape; so were there sages  
and the people with them, who fled  
leaving no trace of their going;

at last these reached wild lands  
where none had dwelt before; here

\*The Chin dynasty began with war, and ended with war in the period 221-207 B.C.

from the tilling of the soil, on through each day till time for rest they brought to flourish mulberry trees and bamboos, which gave them shade; crops of beans and millet were reaped in their season; spring brought long threads from silk cocoons, while in autumn, there were no taxes to pay to any king, for no roads went to the outer world; there were hens cackling and dogs barking; people's customs and their clothing were of days gone by; children banded themselves together, and came singing; the old and white-haired, looked happy, satisfied; strolling around, visiting each other;

there was the glory of harvests standing so peacefully; the trees sighing as they waited for winds to come; in such a place who would worry to keep a calendar, with the four seasons marking off each year?

With so great a fund of happiness no need for heavy labour, or to strive for knowledge to gain place; so felt these who for five hundred years had lived hidden away from all, until so casually found by one from the outside world; but the deep and the shallow come from different environments; so did these drop back once more into their seclusion;

and now I ask you, travellers all,  
could you imagine such a place  
set outside the dust and tumult?

For myself

I would ride on the wings of heaven  
and soaring aloft  
seek this happy land.

*CHAI KUO*

## MARCHING SOUTH

She, gazing at the lone bird flying south,  
cannot hold back her tears; thinking of him  
marching on the southward drive  
now far beyond the furthest base  
of the wild goose; while on that bitter road  
her husband remembers her  
with anguish,

forgetting the frost-filled air  
and her one thin garment  
she stands there, still gazing; and the moon  
breaking through a split in the cloud  
shines full upon her.

Nightly she longs for him  
and yearly hopes in vain for reunion.

“I shall put a mirror in a box,”  
she says, “and send it to him;  
seeing his own grey hairs he will know  
how late it is and return to me.”

And he, his heart longing too  
for home, must ever march  
monotonously through nights and days  
of hardship; tears in his eyes  
when he thinks  
of distant Chang-an.

### THE QUESTION

My loved one has been long in the army  
and here I am left, looking at these walls  
where now hang our musical instruments  
so silently; my hair growing greyer  
on a single pillow, my beauty fading in the light  
of a single lamp; in my heart the everlasting  
question—when  
on our borders shall war cease? When  
will his horse be stabled in our yard again?

## *HO HSUN*

### ON FAREWELLING THE SOLDIER

In the quiet cool of the evening  
friends and relatives of the enlisted man  
stand at the door, seeing him off.

Then as he gets his weapons to go  
his children  
pull at his clothes to make him stay;

while there he stands, a-waiting  
his horse to ride to Hsiao Kuan,  
so joining his comrades at Ma Yi;  
his duty simple—heedless that his corpse  
may have but a horse skin\*  
for its shroud.

\*Soldiers in olden times were often wrapped in a horse skin for burial, there being no coffins available.

*YU CHIEN-WU*

## BATTLE IN THE DUST STORM

Ascending the city wall, we gaze  
over the old battlefield where the men  
of six provinces fought and died.

Looking at the distant ridges  
covered in the yellow haze  
of a dust storm that grows darker  
as it billows forward, we seem  
to see the wild glint of weapons  
through the dim light,  
hear the sad notes of flutes  
broken by the frontier wind.

*HSU LING*

MOON AT THE PASS

At the pass our troops are gazing at the full moon  
and thinking of their homes in Tienshui;

where at night a wife will open her window, sleepless  
in longing for her husband.

The banners of an army are like stars over Kashgar;  
on the tall alps of Nan Shan stand our redoubts.

From olden times until now it has been like this—  
when, oh when will these wars cease?

## IV. THE TANG DYNASTY

### 618-907

*This period in China ran parallel with the general break-down of civilization in Europe following the end of the Roman Empire.*

*At that time China was by far the world's greatest power. Her culture was already rich and mature and influenced both Europe and the rest of Asia. During this period Japan took her written language and many of her customs from China.*

*Military adventurers, however, would still try to get easy fame from war, and against these many of the Tang poets railed, showing the cost of these adventures in people's lives and happiness and in the retarding of progress.*

*As the poets dared not directly attack the powers that were, they usually placed the setting of their poems in an earlier period of history, such as the Han.*

*The emphasis placed by the poets upon peace is very marked indeed. Tu Fu, in particular, hands us down a legacy of which all mankind may be proud.*



BALLAD OF YEN

The northeast\* border regions were ever dark with smoke and dust; generals gloriously left their homes and rode to defend the frontier; lads were pressed to enlist with the promise of seeing distant places, and the Emperor looked down with gracious approval;

to the crash of martial music, the army marched out through the Yu Gate and with banners streaming, passed Chieh Shih; commanders busily sent express dispatches to one another across the desert; on the mountains of Langshan could be seen the fires lit by the hunters of the enemy chief, Shang-yu; here all is desolate—monotonous, stark hills, wild streams.

Then the tribesmen attack like a desert storm; our comrades dead or half-dead lie along the frontier line while in the rear, in the tents of headquarters, lovely ladies comfort the generals with dance and song.

And at sunset at the front line post our decimated troops stand among their dead comrades

\*The "northeast" of that day was the region northeast of Chang-an (the Sian of modern times) and included the provinces now known as Suiyuan, Jehol and Hopei.

The poet (who had been a soldier himself) is probably attacking the army of his day in this satirical poem, but to safeguard himself places the action in the Han period.

proud of the Emperor's favour;  
our generals took no account of the enemy  
so that all their efforts were exhausted  
unable to break the enemy encirclement;

our armour has become thin and battered;  
when we think of those from whom  
we have been separated, we weep;  
while back in our far homes grief rends  
the hearts of our families, tears fall; but for us  
even to think of that other life is useless.

It is impossible to cross the great desert  
let alone try to conquer it all; yet the lust  
for killing, like a cloud recurring,

rolls over us; and in the long cold nights we listen  
to the thud of drums telling us so clearly  
that soon again sword edges will be red with blood  
and death the common portion; once dead  
who will ever care about military glory;

gentlemen, you have not seen the bitterness  
of war in the desert. You may go on sitting  
and discussing the military prowess of Li Kuang  
in the time of Han.

WANG CHANG-LING

LOOKING OUT FROM THE FRONTIER POST\*

For the cicadas the mulberry trees are empty;  
at the gates to the frontier, summer has withdrawn;  
nowhere to go now but to walk out of the fortress and  
then back again; for here is nothing, nothing but yellow  
dried reeds and grasses; here have the soldiers  
of Yu and Ping  
grown old and joined the dusty sand.  
Oh lads at home,  
never be fooled with tales of military prowess, of feats  
of horsemanship, so that you must emulate—  
and end your days here.

UNDER THE FRONTIER POST

We cross a stream and my horse  
drinks up the autumn water; cold  
water now, and the wind cuts like a knife.  
Over the desert sand the sun sets;  
through the haze I can barely see  
the distant walls of Lintao; and I think

\*In the northwest, frontier posts were studded along the Great Wall and its offshoots. The long line of bleak fortresses runs through terrible, desolate country where men on frontier posts have become mad with longing for some more normal kind of life.

In this poem there is the whiff of the frontier, the feeling of stark loneliness and the bitterness of life at these posts. Great sunsets over vast steppe, desert grasses, freezing water, wind that becomes too painful to keep one's face against. Here time seems endless, one century just like another. And always war.

of all the battles fought beside the Great Wall  
and of the tales of battles once  
on all men's lips;  
tales that have vanished  
with the yellow dust storms of the ages; and now  
at times come desert winds that blow  
amongst the grasses  
uncovering scattered bones.

WANG HAN

SONG OF LIANGCHOU\*

We carouse in the evening, tossing down  
grape wine from white jade cups; then  
hurriedly, a last drink as the cavalry band  
strikes up for us to go. The night march\*\* over  
we fall asleep drunk on the desert.

Don't laugh, gentlemen! Always  
of those who go to frontier wars,  
so few return.

\*Liangchou is modern Wuwei, a city by the edge of the desert  
in western Kansu, 273 kilometres west of Lanchow.

\*\*Marching was usually done at night as enemies would not see  
the forces and as, in summer, a midday march would wear out the  
horses. Camels today in this region travel at night.

*LI PAI*

WAR

Last year the war was in the northeast,  
this year we fight in the far northwest,  
grinding our weapons on the stones by  
a highland lake; grazing our horses among snow-drifts  
on Tien-shan slopes; over the vast border front our men  
grow ever older, wearier.

But to our enemy, the Hsiung Nu,\* killing  
is as ploughing to us;  
over the wide desert the only crops  
are whitening bones;  
here the people of Chin tried to wall out the tribesmen;  
here we of Han\*\* must go on  
burning beacon fires for ever,  
as there seems no end  
to this war.

In the madness of the battlefield, men fight and die  
with abandon; horses riderless,  
neigh madly, the piercing sound  
reaching to the heavens; crows  
and eagles tear the intestines from the corpses,  
fly heavily with them so that they catch up  
in the branches of dead trees  
and hang there.

\*The Hsiung Nu of that time were nomadic tribes outside the Great Wall.

\*\*Li Pai writes against aggressive war using Han examples as naturally he cannot criticize his Tang emperor.

Fragments of what once were men  
scattered over the desert—  
and in the end, it seems, the generals  
have settled nothing.

War is a horrible thing—  
only in sheer self-defence  
would our wise men of old  
ever resort to it.

## AUTUMN THOUGHTS

On Yen Chih Mountain, gold leaves of autumn fall  
and I go to the tower above our home  
to think of you; over the water azure clouds  
are breaking; and, from the frontier plains,  
comes the first breath of winter.

Now the tribesmen are mustering their forces  
in the desert; the messengers of Han have  
returned from Yu Men Kuan,\* still there  
is no news of my husband's return; I feel  
that my heart is breaking as I watch the orchid  
withering away.

## LOOKING AT THE MOON

Looking across the desert to Tienshan Mountains  
and at a moon that seems to float over a sea of cloud,  
steppe and desert over which  
the wind blows unceasingly,  
whistling around the towers of Yu Men Kuan;

I think of the bitterness of the Pai Teng Road  
and of the tribesmen around  
the shores of Lake Kokonor\*\*  
ever pressing against us.

\*Yu Men Kuan (the Jade Pass) is at the end of the Great Wall  
in western Kansu.

\*\*Lake Kokonor (Blue Lake), the present Lake Chinghai in the  
province of that name.

It is an old story, that from the battlefield  
no man ever returns; so the soldiers gaze  
back at the frontier regions

all with the longing to return home  
written in the gaunt lines of their faces.

And I think of the towers in our distant homes  
where our loved ones will be standing and sighing  
with no answering sound coming from the stillness.

### AUTUMN SADNESS

Through  
the yellow-golden clay\*  
of the Great Wall he rides  
a white horse;

so she dreams, always thinking  
of him in war, living in desert wastes;

fireflies flit by her window,  
the moonlight passes over her;

she  
left with all the sadness  
of autumn leaves colouring,  
withering, falling, of branches  
being left bare—

\*Yellow-golden clay describes the loess of Northwest China. The Great Wall in the Northwest is a high rampart of rammed loess clay, unlike the grey brick wall near Peking.

unseen by any  
weeps each hour  
knowing full well  
tears are useless.

## AUTUMN ON THE FRONTIER

With the oncoming of autumn  
hungry tribesmen become restive,  
so the army of Imperial Han  
marches to the frontier.

As we leave our fortifications  
tiger batons\* are issued to commanders,  
camp equipment to soldiers  
who will sleep on desert sands.

The frontier moon shines on the bows  
and frost sparkles on the bright swords.

No, little wife at home, so far  
I have not even re-entered  
Yu Men Kuan, so little use for you  
to sigh so bitterly.

\*"Tiger batons" were batons with a tiger's head engraved on them, the duplicate of which was kept by the headquarters of the troops. It was the visual sign of command and the troops seeing it would follow the commander who bore it.

## EVENING SONG

Chang-an\* under a new moon, and I in the evening  
listen to the sound of many women beating clothes  
by the water.\*\*

An autumn wind blows and I know well  
that many a woman feels its chill, and is anxious for  
her husband, fighting in the far Northwest—

then she thinks, “I wonder when the war  
will end, so that he will no longer need  
to fight.”

## ON A WINTER'S NIGHT

Tomorrow a courier will gallop\*\*\*  
swiftly west, and will take from her  
a gift;

so preparing it she sits  
through the night—a soldier’s  
padded coat—and into its stitching  
she puts her heart.

\*Chang-an was the capital in the Tang dynasty.

\*\*Chinese women washed their clothing by beating it with wooden bats by the riverside.

In the period of which the poet writes there was constant war on the northwest frontier, and these simple lines express the anxiety of the women and their longing for peace.

\*\*\*The Imperial couriers went in relays from Chang-an, the capital, to the border armies.

Fingers freeze so that movement  
becomes difficult; to grasp  
the ice-cold scissors painful;

yet before dawn sewing is finished  
and hopefully she hands it to relay riders  
to carry all the long way to Lintao;\*  
wondering anxiously how many days it will be  
before he wears her handiwork.

## DOWN INTO SZECHUAN

A wild, steep road  
more hazardous to take  
than to try to climb  
the heavens, it would seem;

in the dim, forgotten ages  
men came and settled in this country  
yet never building roads  
to the centre of our Empire; just  
leaving us the kind of path  
birds can walk over, winding onward from Shensi  
to the Mountain of Omei; a road,  
such as it is, that was rent by earthquake  
so that the ground subsided, mountains  
split asunder and brave men  
were lost; and now there is but  
this track, steps cut here and there  
in stone, suspension bridges over

\*Lintao is a city in Kansu, near the old Tibetan border and is now populated largely by the descendants of the Mohammedan soldiers brought to China to quell the An Lu-shan rebellion in the period with which this poem deals.

raging torrents; crawling across, one catches a glimpse of the way high up ahead, then looking down in terror finds below the seething waters; not even the Yellow Crane could pass easily here; better for us to go on four feet like monkeys; around and then around that mountain of green clay we wind, nine twists to each hundred steps, panting for breath, each holding his chest with his hands, staggering towards the stars;

but why take such a road, one asks? Why go into the unknown through such dangers, the only sign of life mountain birds on ancient trees wooing each other; hearing on moonlight nights their mournful cries echoing over the waste; surely this march is more difficult than trying to fly; even the tales of the peril leave the faces of listeners white; ahead, the peaks seem just one foot below heaven; ancient pine trees hang down the face of the cliffs; and the wild waters tempestuously roar; boulders crash and through all the valleys resounds the thunder of their falling;

and you who have travelled this long and weary way through all these dangers, why have you come? Truly, here stands a pass which one man could hold against many but should this man be a traitor like

those we have left, a wolf or a tiger,  
what then?

For we have slipped away  
from savage tigers, from  
treacherous snakes; from where  
men were chopped to bits like hemp  
with wild beasts chewing their flesh;

\* therefore look we to the cities of Szechuan  
with longing; yet facing the reality  
of the road wonder if it were not better  
to turn back; harder to go on  
than to climb to heaven—then grimly  
facing the way forward  
we march again.

Anyone who has been down the back valleys of Szechuan will understand this poem well. All fighters of the Chinese Red Army who were on the Long March would understand it. The vast tumbled mass of jagged mountains, the huge clefts made by earthquake, the roaring torrents the sound of which drowns all speech, the steps through green clay mountains. The translator himself has been terrified going on all fours over some of the bamboo rope suspension bridges.

At the time written of by Li Pai the refugees were fleeing the horrors of the civil war that followed the rebellion of An Lu-shan, a ruthless militarist seeking power for himself.

The whole point of the poem is that the savagery of the civil war behind them is even more to be feared than the dangers of the road and even the uncertainty of the welcome ahead; will they find that having reached their refuge, wolves in human form await them, as fierce as those from which they have escaped?

## THE RESULT

The armies of Chin Shih Huang\*  
swept through the land, fierce,  
heroic; when arms were raised

\*First emperor of the Chin dynasty (221-207 B.C.).

for war,  
the lords of men rushed to join with them;

pulling down one dynasty  
did this conqueror set  
up his own; making a powerful  
empire, reaching to all  
sea coasts;

seven hundred thousand prisoners  
he had, making them toil as slaves  
building his palaces and gardens  
hoping through some magic medicine  
to gain for himself eternal life;

even sending off youth to islands of the east  
to ask the immortals for this; then  
on the top of the cliffs watching  
anxiously for their return;

and the net result of all  
of this?  
A rich coffin containing  
some cold and lifeless ashes.

*LI HUA*

SAD THOUGHTS ON A BATTLEFIELD

A vast expanse of deserted country  
a curling river winding around it  
hills of drifting sand; no living person,  
silent, dead; a moaning wind blowing  
under the desert sun; withered grasses  
and brambles carried by the wind, aimlessly;  
cold as on a frosty morning; even the birds  
do not alight, and wild animals go astray  
looking for their mates;

at the remount station by the Wall  
I asked the guard what place was this  
and replying he told me that here  
was an ancient battlefield; that here  
many had died, so that on dull days in the rain  
one could hear their spirits weep;  
a frightful place, of frightful memory;

and I wondered, was it Chin or Han,  
or of some more recent date?

I had heard that Chi and Wei conscripted men for wars  
while Chin and Han called for volunteers  
from the starving,  
which amounted to much the same thing;  
with the soldiers

leaving their homes to go to distant places,  
sleeping by the edge of roads, feeding their horses  
on desert grass, breasting rivers of ice, going

so far that no longer would they know  
how to return; living with their lives balanced  
on the edge of a sword; bitter their thoughts  
yet whom could they tell? None!

After Chin and Han, there was always  
war with the tribesmen; all the resources  
of the country were exhausted; so it was  
with every period; yet I have heard that  
in ancient times the tribesmen never crossed  
our borders, or sought to engage us in arms;  
only with the decline of civilization  
with its degeneration of education, was it  
that military men were left to resort to strategy  
instead of using the power of peace;  
maybe the peaceful method was thought too slow  
or not glorious enough for generals;

that is how it is—  
but to return to the story of the battle here;

the wind blew up the sand, covering all  
so that the soldiers' eyes were full of sand,  
but in this enemy country, our opponents  
were used to sand and outflanked us  
under its cover; our general was too proud

and did not understand; so the enemy came  
and we were put on the defensive; the battlefield  
was covered with standards, and all along the river  
tents were pitched; iron discipline struck terror  
into every heart, with the lives of the soldiers  
of no account, where the prestige of the commanders  
was concerned; came the order and we closed  
with the enemy; arrows entered flesh; sand  
blew in our faces; we picked our opponents

and fought so fiercely that we were no longer aware of our surroundings; the sound of the river was lost in the cries of battle; we clutched and stabbed—then the dust storm was followed by snow that fell heavily till at the end it reached our knees; on our beards icicles hung; even the vultures took shelter, and our horses, shivering with cold, would not move; so bitter a cold that coats padded with silk, gave no warmth;

skins cracked open, fingers froze and dropped off, and the enemy, taking advantage of the conditions, wrought great havoc amongst us; so that with the battle lost corpses filled the hollows; ditches by the Great Wall ran with blood; death was on all sides; regardless of rank, men died together;

the drums were broken, no strength was left, bow-strings burst, arrows all shot off, swords cleft at their hafts; fight, and death is sure; surrender—and we become foreign slaves; the birds were dumb, and the hills remained silent then all through the long night, only the cold wind whistled; spirits came together in the black clouds that overhung us; though the sun burst through in the day, it was still freezing; at night the moon looked sad and mournful; next morning all was covered with frost; surely no sight could have been more heart-rending than this;

I have heard that in the olden days when the Huns attacked us, Li Mu led the men of Chao against them, and they retreated, leaving us a thousand li of territory; but the Han Emperors mobilized great armies, exhausting the resources of the country to no purpose; showing that it is not the numbers that count, rather the

quality of leadership;  
in the time of Chou, the army drove back the invading  
tribesmen to Taiyuan, pressing them no further; then  
they fortified the northern frontier,  
and the whole army returned  
to the joy of all, to celebrate its victory;

but with the Chin, things became different;  
the First Emperor's lust for power ate up  
the lives of his people in reckless onslaughts;  
building the Great Wall that left a trail of blood;  
then the Han Emperors took the offensive  
against the Huns, covering whole battlefields  
with bones, and the barren Yen Shan was a pitiful  
gain compared with all the losses of our men;

and when I think of how people love their children  
hug them, caress them, carry them so carefully,  
looking upon them as the most precious thing, dreading  
that they may not live long; how brothers grow up  
together like members of the same body; how when  
a man gets a wife, he loves and cherishes her—

then how these men are taken  
and made into soldiers; this is hateful;  
killing other men they do not know  
and being killed by them; families at night  
dream of their loved ones—alive or dead?  
Now and then come rumours about them,  
with the real truth ever in doubt;

so here do I make my offering to you  
sad spirits of the ancient battlefield;  
tears fill my eyes as I gaze at the horizon  
even the landscape, the grass and the trees  
look downcast, sharing my grief; this offering I make

so that you may not wander helplessly, famines and calamities arise;

oh, is it death, or is it life we seek?  
Can it be that this is the will of heaven  
or do we just have bad fortune?

From the days of old unto this time we have borne  
the scourge of war; what, then shall we do?  
To me, the answer is simple; no war  
of conquest shall we wage; keep only men enough  
to protect ourselves.

*TU FU*

## BALLAD OF THE WAR CHARIOTS

To the sound of war chariots on the move,  
of horses neighing,  
men march  
with their bows and arrows slung over their hips,  
while beside them stumble, run, a mass of parents,  
wives, children who tug at their clothing  
until in the dust  
by the great bridge at Hsien Yang they can go  
no further  
and stamping their feet  
and weeping in utter desperation their cries seem  
to reach to the clouds  
so intense are they.

To ask a soldier, "why do you go?" would only  
bring the simple answer, "today men are conscripted  
often; fifteen-year-olds are sent to the northern border  
to fight; men of forty to colonize frontier lands;  
before he leaves his village a lad will have his hair  
bound for the first time by our headman; if he ever  
returns, it will be white with age, and even then  
he will be sent to guard the frontiers;

frontiers on which enough blood has flowed  
to make a sea; yet the Emperor Wu  
still desires to expand his authority;

east of Hua Shan, county towns and villages  
are desolate with weeds and thorns;

the strongest women  
till the fields, but lacking everything, crops  
are poor and scattered;

our men are not afraid  
of the fiercest battle; but hate  
to be driven like dogs or chickens;  
only since you ask me do I dare  
give vent to our grievances;

for instance, take this winter  
with the men from the frontier not yet  
returned, the magistrate demands  
immediate payment of taxes; how  
can we pay when naught has been  
produced?

We peasants have learned one thing now—  
to have a son is not so good  
as to have a daughter who can be married  
to some neighbour and still be near us;

for a son will be taken from us;  
his bones, bleached white, will join  
those that lie unburied on the shores  
of Lake Kokonor;  
where the voices of new spirits join with the old  
heard sadly through the murmur  
of falling rain."

## IN FRONT OF THE GREAT WALL

Slipping out of our old homes  
and forced to march with the army

over the roads and rivers, yet knowing that regulations fix dates of arrivals and departures at stations and all not keeping to these will be punished;

we wonder why the Emperor who has so much rich, good land should want to have us march to the frontiers to gain more; with all the love and grace of parents flung aside as we join in the tumult of war.

## ARMY TRAINING

Now so long in the army that I am no longer treated as a novice; not that I have forgotten the love of my family, but when at any moment one may be killed, when one has to pick up a dropped rein amongst pounding hoofs or jump down a crag to seize an enemy flag in the valley below—then thoughts of home must be pushed out of one's mind.

## GRINDING ARMS

Grinding our weapons,  
and the sound comes through  
the swishing of water as it

suddenly turns red from the hands  
cut by the blade, the sharp pain  
culminating in bitter mood; yet  
given to army service, how can one  
complain? One's name shall be  
inscribed on the roll of honour  
and one's bones shall, with the bones  
of others, change to dust.

### A SOLDIER'S BITTERNESS

Over all those long roads  
leading us to the armies here;  
armies where so many are bitter  
and sad, only the few happy; our  
proud general does not concern himself  
about us; and now, over the river,  
I see all the banners of the enemy;  
nought am I but the slave of my  
masters; what hope for me  
to be given honour?

### THOUGHTS AT THE FRONTIER

In picking out bows  
pick the longest;  
in choosing arrows  
choose the strongest;  
in killing men, first kill their horses,  
in taking captives, first capture the commanders.

There is a limit to the killing of men;  
a country should have its frontiers  
and hold to them.

It is enough to keep aggressors  
away; no sense in so much wounding,  
killing.

### THE COLD

Riding  
through rain and snow,  
our troops enter  
the tall mountains  
in dangerous places,  
clinging to frozen stones;  
fingers freezing and falling off  
on to the icy ground.  
And I think how long  
since I left home! And  
so thinking gaze up  
at the little clouds  
floating so easily  
southward  
and grieve  
that I cannot  
ride with them.

## BY THE GREAT WALL

At dawn the new soldiers  
enter the camp outside the East Gate  
then march all day and in the evening  
cross the Ho Yang Bridge, red light of sunset  
colouring their banners.

Horses neigh, the wind whistles  
around tents pitched in the desert;  
each unit musters in its  
proper quarters, under the brightness  
of the moonlight;

then come strict orders  
for silence through the night;  
and sadness spreads, deepened

by the sound of the music of the tribesmen  
borne plaintively on the wind,  
striking a chord in all hearts

so that all tremble with emotion  
and seasoned soldiers are no longer proud.

Who, may I ask, is the general here?  
Is it Huo Piao Yao?\*

\*Here Tu Fu is probably criticizing some military adventurer of his time, perhaps An Lu-shan, but for safety's sake places his poem in the Han dynasty and names an adventurer-general of that period, Huo Piao Yao. An Lu-shan, a northeasterner, was the favourite of Yang Kuei Fei, the Emperor Ming Huang's most beautiful concubine. He later rebelled in a bid for personal power which cost the China of his day thirty million lives.

## LOOKING OUT ON SPRING

Though our country has been crushed  
rivers and hills stay the same; the city  
is filled with tall trees and the high  
grass of spring; even flowers seem to shed  
tears for the sadness of our time, and birds  
grieve at the sight of people  
parting from their beloved;

now  
for these three months  
have the beacon fires  
flared unceasingly  
while a letter from home is as precious  
as gold  
and when I strive to bind up  
my grey hairs, they are so few  
the pin will not hold them.

## THOUGHTS BY MOONLIGHT

Over the heavens the autumn moon  
comes to its fullness; on earth  
clear shadows are cast by men. I gaze

into its brightness and see  
the Rabbit still grinding his medicine  
the Toad eternally by the Milky Way,

and feel that life continues;

yet as I sit under the night sky  
my heart fills with bitterness,  
grey hairs gleaming whiter under this moon,  
as I reflect on the war that still covers  
our land; rebelling

against the moonlight; it should not shine  
on soldiers' camps, turning all hearts  
towards home.

### RETURN TO CHIANG VILLAGE (Chiang Village I)

Over the stately mountains a setting sun  
throws its gorgeous colour; on the plain  
the day slips out; sparrows twitter  
around the lattice gate; and I, after  
all those miles, all that suffering,  
am home.

Wife and children, eyes wide with surprise,  
meet me, shedding many a quiet tear; not  
so easy with all the world at war, to have  
a man come home; yet this joy has come to me  
and them.

The neighbours' heads stick over the garden wall  
and everywhere one hears sighs of surprise  
and welcome; in the dead of night  
we sit by the light of a candle  
and I gaze into the faces of my dear ones as if  
in a dream.

## FIRST DAYS AT HOME (Chiang Village II)

Held down by war through all those years,  
snatching one's life from death—

and now the joy of return is tempered  
by the sorrows of poverty, of separation

my much-loved son stays close to my side  
as though fearing that his father  
suddenly may be gone again to that other life;

and so we explore together all the old places  
I knew to be so good  
and cool in the summer;

walk under the trees and around the pool  
with the north wind sighing so gently;

comforting things are these to one harassed  
with so many anxieties;

for we know that we must rely  
on our harvests of millet;

so we take counsel together  
how we should make wine enough,

wine that would encourage us  
through all our days, in the eve of life.

## THE WELCOME PARTY (Chiang Village III)

Such a noise from our flock of chickens  
that I chase them off under the trees  
to stop their fighting; for the neighbours  
are here, already knocking at the garden gate.

Here comes the group of elders—four or five  
of them, each in his hand a present, greeting me  
after my long journey; we sit, and together  
we drink the wine they have brought me  
in wooden jugs;

“poor stuff,” they say, and then go on  
wondering how we could have better, for  
the millet fields are not ploughed, the  
call for soldier’s armour never ceases;  
sons have gone marching East with the army;  
and I reply, “let me sing a song for you,  
my elders, of how sweet a thing it is to have  
your help in days of trouble” and after the song  
I sighed, and we looked into each other’s eyes  
seeing all were wet with tears.

## THOUGHTS ON THE ROAD NORTH

Wars still not ended;  
so am I consumed by wrath  
as, weeping a little, unwilling  
to leave our temporary capital,

I ride on, pondering on the plight  
of our country; when will all this  
worry and sadness cease?

Over winding tracks  
that lead through the fields  
we pick our way; a country now  
laid waste, men nor any sign of life  
but rarely seen; only at times  
wounded soldiers bleeding and  
crying out in their distress; I  
look back at Fenghsiang,\* seeing the  
glint of the setting sun wane  
on fluttering standards; and then  
we turn into the tumbled, freezing  
hills, halting now and then  
to water our horses  
by the roadside;

in the middle of one night  
we cross an old battlefield  
with the cold moonlight shining  
on white bones; and I think of  
all the slain of olden times  
who have fallen near this great  
Eastern Pass; here half the men  
of Chin met death or maiming;

and as we travel I remember  
how I was taken by the enemy  
and held for one whole year,

\*Fenghsiang is a city in western Shensi, not far from the modern Paochi, on the Lunghai Railway. At the time of which Tu Fu writes, it had been made the temporary capital following the devastation of Chang-an in the civil wars. Tu Fu had been captured and held by the enemy for a year, and returned home to find his family starving.

my hair going white with all  
my troubles; then the return  
home; meeting my family in their  
poverty, half-starved with clothes  
in rags;

how we wept together  
like pines in the wind  
lonely and desolate;  
and my most-loved child  
who had been so beautiful  
unkempt and dirty; she  
and the others standing  
in front of the bed, clad only  
in pieces of old garments  
sewn together;

yet was I still alive  
and could play with them  
and it was as though  
the bitterness of hunger  
and thirst were eased when  
they plied me with questions  
and pulled my beard; and  
I could not be angry and  
shout at them, for after all  
my captivity it was good  
to listen to their inconsequential  
talk; for I had come back from  
death; and now remained but one  
problem  
how to live?

## A TRAVELLER'S STORY\*

The man from Hsin-an said  
he heard there the conscripting officials  
yelling for able-bodied men; and the people  
answering that the place was small and  
their best had been taken already; bringing  
the announcement that the younger lads  
would-be called up; and the protest; "they  
are so short and small, how can they help  
to defend cities"—going unheeded;  
the fat boys had mothers to  
farewell them; the lean ones  
who are the orphans, trudged alone;  
beside them the sparkling stream  
flows east, and the sound of weeping is echoed  
from the green hills, until one advises them  
"hold your tears  
lest your eyes be hurt;  
you may weep until the bones show  
but neither heaven nor earth  
will come to your help."

## OFFICIAL VISIT TO SHIH HAO VILLAGE

One sunset I came to Shih Hao Village and  
shortly there followed  
an official, seizing conscripts;  
in the courtyard of the peasant's home where I stayed  
an old man quickly got over the wall and vanished.

\*Extract from a longer poem.

To the door came his old wife to greet the official  
as best she could;  
he, in great anger, swore at her,  
but she answered bitterly, and I heard her words:

“I have had three sons taken  
to be soldiers at Yeh Cheng  
then came a letter saying that two had  
been killed and that the third never knew  
which day he would die.

Now in this hut there is  
none but a baby grandson  
whose mother still suckles him;  
she cannot go out as she has no clothing  
to cover her nakedness.

All I can do is to go back with you  
to the battle at Hoyang;  
there I can cook, even though I am old—  
take me, spare them.”

Night wore on  
the sound of voices died away  
until there was left coming from the hut, only  
the sobbing of the daughter-in-law;  
at dawn I rose and left  
with only the old man  
to bid me good-bye.

## LAMENT OF THE NEW WIFE

The gentle creeper does not cling  
to the wild bramble that breaks loose  
and goes tumbling across the plain; better to lie  
taking no hold, though it can scarcely grow.

So feel I, the girl married  
to a soldier.

Betrothed, our wedding came  
the night before he marched; and now I may  
no longer warm his bed; for speedily  
he left at dawn.

Although he's not so far away  
with the frontier only at Hoyang,  
I can't be with him as a wedded woman,  
and feeling scarcely a wife, how can I go to bow  
and serve his parents?

My family, when they reared me  
kept me day and night in the home; and so  
I became shy and retiring; yet a grown  
woman has a woman's rights;  
even the chickens and the dogs have mates.

Now he marches to the place of death  
and my heart is torn with despair; would  
that I could be with him, yet would this  
but distract, not help; it could not be;  
the joys of marriage must be forgotten  
and I must wish for him only that he  
may do his duty as a gallant soldier;

my old home was poor  
it took me long to get  
my wedding clothes; and now  
that I have the silks of a bride  
I cannot wear them; now I wash  
the colour from my lips and face;

seeing as I look around, the birds  
small and big, pairing together  
and thinking how the affairs of men  
are not arranged as well as these;

so in our separation, shall he and I  
be for ever longing  
for one another.

## THE OLD MAN RETURNS TO WAR

War everywhere;  
though old, I cannot have quiet, for  
with sons and grandsons killed  
in the fighting, life for me  
has now but little meaning.

Throwing away my stick  
I get outside the house;  
an object of sorrow  
to my friends, telling myself  
that still I have some of my teeth  
although my bones are brittle; then  
fitting myself up as best I can  
report to the local official  
for service;

and as I leave, I pass  
my old wife, kneeling by the path  
crying; I notice how the winter wind  
blows through her thin clothing; think  
how unlikely it is that we shall  
meet again; then worry about her  
catching cold, but she only says to me,  
"look after yourself" as I go; and I muse

fortifications at Tu Men Pass are strong  
river crossings at Hsing Yuan difficult;  
yet there the situation is better than at  
Yeh Cheng; maybe there is yet some time  
to live, though death does seem certain;  
one knows that separation is  
a common enough thing, regardless of youth  
or age; yet still would one linger on  
sighing because one is no longer young,  
and the whole of our land is mad  
with war; beacon fires smoke from every  
fort; corpses lie among the grass, stinking;  
and streams are crimson with blood;

so does one wonder just where  
peace and happiness may be found, for here  
at home it is as bad as on the frontiers;  
now there is little reason for me to stay,  
go I must and broken-hearted, the old man  
passes from his home, out into  
the unknown.

## THE HOMELESS

In all those years of confusion  
weeds grew over gardens and homes;  
my own village of some hundred families  
was ruined; with no news of its sons  
away fighting; dead, they had simply  
turned to mud.

After the defeats in battle, I returned  
finding all changed; even the sky  
seemed dismal and the day cold and dreary,  
all around were foxes and wild-cats; their hair  
standing on end; filling the place  
with their cries; the old security  
gone.

Now people were scattered and few;  
in some of the corners old widows barely  
existed; and one thought how the birds  
planned so much better than we;  
  
for a bird does not leave its nest, so shall I,  
despite the desolation, stay in my home village;  
  
now in the spring I take my tools  
and work from morn till night; but again  
men are needed for war, and the county officials,  
caring nothing, send a yamen runner  
to lead me off.

If there are none left at home, then it is easier;  
then to be far off is a small thing, indeed,  
the farther the better;

my mind goes back to my old mother,  
sick five years and then dying so miserably;  
she who bore me getting nothing in return—  
ah, all our lives have been made bitter by war!

Now homeless again, and forced once more  
to go and fight, I wonder why I could not  
have been born to some common state, and  
left alone.

This poem is of the time of the civil war started by An Lu-shan,  
when there was much distress among the people.

## THE GLORY OF WAR

On an old battlefield  
I get down from the saddle  
seeing nothing but the grasses  
waving before a dreary wind  
flecks of cloud across the sky  
golden leaves dropping sadly;

bones of the slaughtered  
now left to ants to crawl  
amongst; skulls with creepers  
running through sightless  
eyes;

and as I paced, I thought  
of how men continue aggression;  
sighing  
thinking of all the conditions  
on our frontiers.

## THINKING OF MY BROTHERS IN THE MOONLIGHT

War drums rattle;  
below, the roads are bare.

The sound of a wild goose flying  
so low and so swiftly this autumn night\*  
brings sharp desire for a message from home.

Here now, the dew changes to frost; and  
the moon shines as bright as in my own  
native land; my brothers are scattered  
and now, at home, none remain to wonder if I  
am alive or dead;

but why torture myself with all this thinking?  
Even if we were at peace we are too far  
for news to reach us; now, at war,  
what hope is there?

## WASHING CLOTHES

Still you do not return from war; so  
must we clean the washing stones  
and prepare clothing  
for the cold of the bitter months to come.

\*In autumn, in the northwest, wild geese fly southward at night, flying low and in formation. Their flying makes soldiers think of letters, just as moonlight makes them think of home.

Without you near  
the days are empty;

what can we do but wash your warm clothing  
and try to send it to the distant frontier?

So we collect our women's strength and beat  
with so great a noise that perhaps  
ever you will hear  
the sound coming to you through the air.

## FAREWELL

It seems that all of our world  
is at war, yet you ask why  
must I flee to such far places?  
Friends gather around and weep  
as I saddle my horse for departure  
to those distant, lone cities;

now is the time when leaves begin to fall  
on the passes, and by the river there will be  
snow and frost;

though we parted but yesterday,  
already we understood the sorrow  
of all old partings, when  
loved ones separated.

The poet speaks of the bitterness of leaving home to become a war refugee.

## SONG OF THE BARLEY

And now the barley is ripe  
the wheat turning yellow; yet  
wives are still weeping for their husbands  
who have either run away to hide,  
gone east to Chi and Pi or west  
to Liang and Yang; and all over  
these areas, none reap  
but the enemy.

Ask why the three thousand  
Szechuanese soldiers do not reap  
and all we can say

is that they live in bitterness up in the  
mountains, without rest, yet unable to hold off  
the enemy; so that now the only way I might return  
would be to rise on wings like a bird, then  
entering a cloud of white, fly home.

Tu Fu is a war refugee in Szechuan, and thinks of his old home  
in Shensi.

## AUTUMN MELANCHOLY

Last autumn when leaves began to fall  
along the Fu River, a lad passed here  
riding his horse, carrying his spear  
so proudly; now no one knows where his bones  
lie bleaching; for of those who went  
none have returned;

inside the city of Suichou,\*  
the imperial banners still stand  
though in the countryside, but few  
local people have survived;

on the battlefields  
the spirits of the dead weep  
while in the army camps  
there is despondency.

### THE SOLDIER

Look in ten homes and you would find  
but few men; the mountains and hills  
become useless for defence; all along  
the main roads are soldiers, while  
the people are weeping; nowhere in the cities  
can you hear the sound of songs;

refugees from war everywhere, like  
withered grass scattered on the wind;  
everywhere the stamp of soldiers  
equipped for battle;

the forces that would bring order  
do not arrive, so am I left by  
the cross-roads in Szechuan, not knowing  
where to go.

\*Suichou is a city in northern Szechuan. A rebellion took place  
there the year before.

## NIGHT THOUGHTS ON PEACE AND WAR

A cool breeze from the bamboo groves  
enters my room; bright shafts of moonlight dance  
wildly in the courtyard; a heavy dew is falling;  
and here and there stars twinkle; fireflies flit  
from one dark place to another; and the waterfowl  
by the river call to each other;

and I, pondering on a strange thing—that all  
the world depends on war rather than  
on peace, sit through the night  
in sadness.

## SONG OF THE FIREWOOD VENDORS

With hair  
already changing colour,  
middle aged  
and still unmarried, are  
the working women of  
Kueichou; for  
with wars raging still,  
they have no chance  
for husbands; so  
their lives are full  
of resentment and despair;  
here, in this place  
old custom persists,  
with women on their feet  
and out working, while  
the men sit, and watch

their homes; here  
most women climb the hills  
seeking firewood, carrying  
it in on their backs  
to sell for food;

yet even in their middle age  
they wear their hair  
in girlish plaits;  
sticking wild flowers  
and pretty leaves, into it  
with silver hairpins; then  
over the mountains  
they climb, packing  
on their backs great loads  
of branches; or else  
they seek work down  
in the salt wells, risking  
their lives, to earn what they  
may; from their faces  
nothing may erase  
the marks of bitterness  
the tears; for their days  
they pass in barren lands  
with little clothing  
to keep out the cold, cut  
off from life;

some say,  
the women of this place,  
are just too ugly; yet here  
is a village, famous for a  
beauty of beauties.\*

\*Referring to the beautiful concubine, Wang Chao-chun, given by a Han Emperor to an enemy chieftain. Kueichou of that day was a city on the Yangtse, west of Hankow.

Tu Fu talks of the effects of war on country women left at home.

## THUNDER

They burn off the hill sides  
to scare out the rain dragons,  
yet still the drought persists  
and clouds simply taunt;

in southern country where  
the climate brings disease  
a farmer's work is tough;  
now everywhere they pray  
for rain; dance to gain  
the compassion of gods;  
through the hills sounds  
the beating of drums, bringing  
only silence from the dragon  
kings, who should provide;

so  
are the rites  
to gods of clay  
useless.

The people sigh in despair  
everywhere the harvest has failed  
so have the farmers naught  
with which to pay taxes;

the grey-haired elders  
stare at heaven, and weeping  
shout back at it; to whom  
can they tell of their oppression,  
of their wounds?

## Useless

to suffer torture  
to hope for heavenly clemency  
to blame witches\*  
useless;

what can be done  
is to halt aggressive war  
punish the greedy who  
break the law;  
and everywhere, all men  
go about their proper work  
naught stolen, naught used amiss;

surely there may come  
long droughts and floods\*\*  
as they did in ancient times  
these, in our lives  
we hope to avoid;

for the heat of the sun  
will melt both gold and stone;  
now have men turned to be  
robbers, wild beasts; with  
the male principle dominant\*\*\*  
how can things but grow  
increasingly wilder;

last night  
there was the crash of thunder

\*Witches, or mediums in the old society were urged to speak more strongly to the gods, and were blamed if dry weather came.

\*\*In ancient times there were long legendary droughts and floods, to which Tu Fu refers. His thesis is that ordinary shortages could be met, if there was not illicit taxation and war preparations.

\*\*\*The principle of the sun is male. Male forces alone make for trouble.

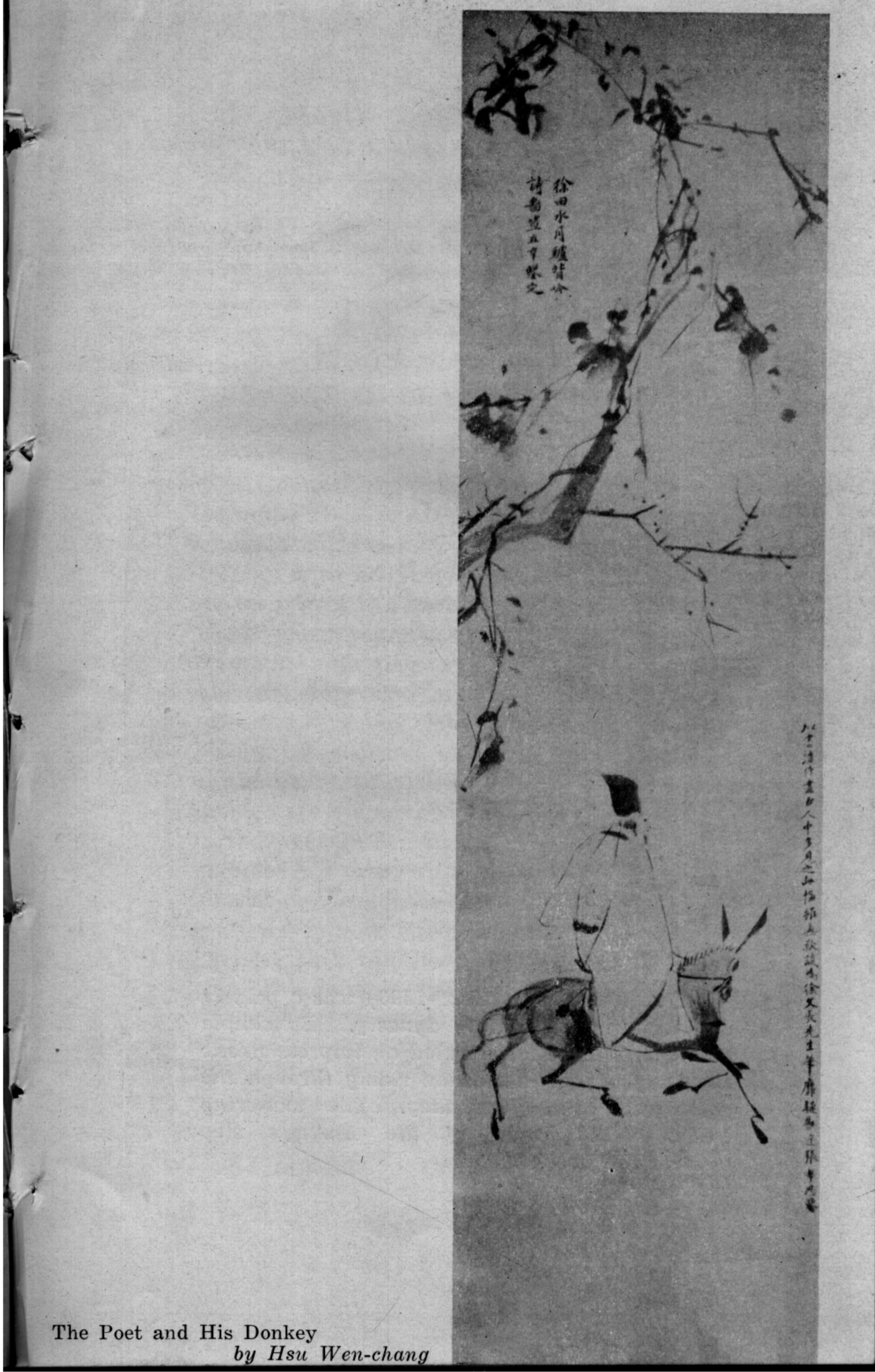
like the noise of war; winds  
tore over the heavens; rains  
vanished; surely the spirits  
are futile;

hard to breathe  
in this heat, for  
one's body seems  
to disintegrate;  
sweat  
makes garments sodden;  
one feels a wreck;  
in sickness, my case is  
worse than that of others  
for me there is no hope  
for harvest.

## DEFENCE AND SUPPLY

And now lies burnt  
our eastern capital;  
no use to say that a couple of men  
can defend the pass against a hundred;  
for everywhere there  
is wavering; and as  
for our northern defences  
built in the time of ancient kings,  
have these been maintained?

And again, who are these  
who struggle into the office  
of ministers? Let us look  
to the example of one leader



# The Poet and His Donkey *by Hsu Wen-chang*

*Hsu Wen-chang (1521-1593) was a painter and writer of the Ming dynasty. By simple brush strokes he has created an impressionistic sketch of a poet in autumn riding through the countryside on his donkey. The withering leaves and lightness of the donkey's step express the poet's mood.*

who has doffed his splendour  
leading his men to grow grain,  
supporting themselves.

In the time of Tu Fu, a court rebellion led by An Lu-shan seized power and armies advanced towards the capital, then Chang-an. Loyang, the old eastern capital, was burnt and the troops were at the pass leading to Chang-an.

## CHANGE IN CHANG-AN

The Chang-an of ours today  
becomes like a great  
chess-board, for men  
to play with Empire; too late  
do we regret the havoc  
the ill-spent years have  
wrought; now palaces  
and mansions have new lords  
even the styles of clothing  
change; war drums call  
to the northern borders,  
armies are dispatched  
to the western regions,  
enemies are everywhere; the  
autumn of decadence has  
truly set in, and I feel the chill  
harking back to other times  
when things were different.

The poem is a lament on Chang-an after it had been sacked first by An Lu-shan, and then by the western Turfan tribesmen.

## MILITARY GLORY

The lake he made and called  
Kunming; where in the days  
of the military glory of Han  
the standards of Emperor Wu\* dazzled  
so many eyes; and now  
of all this, just the stone  
statue of the Weaving Girl  
standing silently in the moonlight  
and the scales on the stone whale  
flapping emptily in the dull  
autumn wind;

floating autumn seeds  
ride over the wavelets; lotus  
flowers shed their petals of  
pink;  
up to the gates of heaven the birds  
soar easily  
and the world is covered with the majesty  
of lakes and rivers; how puny is  
transient man.

## NIGHT ON THE WATCH-TOWER

Days shorten and the frost  
and snow make nights brighter;

\*Emperor of the Han dynasty, a power-loving militarist, sought to add to the glory of his name by various wonderful monuments such as the stone whale with movable scales and the statue of the Weaving Girl (who in the Chinese fable weaves the clouds) and by making a great lake near his capital at Chang-an where he trained his troops.

at the fifth watch the alarm  
begins to sound; over the gorges  
are the stars alive and the Milky Way.

With the call to war, wailing starts  
in all our villages; for men will go  
and men will not return.

Our tribesmen enemy go on with their fishing,  
collecting their firewood, singing.

Our heroes of the Three Kingdoms\*  
were masters of strategy; yet now  
they have joined the yellow dust and are  
of no use to the people.

So hopes remain unrealized  
even the letters I have hoped for  
do not arrive.

## THOUGHTS BEFORE NEW YEAR

The year draws in, and around  
the Tungting Lake snow drives,  
freezing the nets in the hands  
of the fishermen; so that they  
leave their fishing to shoot  
arrows made of mulberry branches  
at the wild geese; last season  
military demands forced up  
the price of grain; now it has

\*Three Kingdoms (220-264), famous epoch in Chinese history.

dropped, and the peasants suffer,  
while haughty officials, who prance  
on gallant steeds, have drunk and  
have gorged to their fill; in the  
homes of the poor, there is  
no money to buy yarn for weaving;  
people here can only afford to eat  
fish; so, my men, you had better  
let the geese fly south in peace;

for you also know that  
boys and girls are being sold  
by kind and loving families, because  
taxes for war must be paid,  
regardless of all; once when  
coins were needed, the government  
put a stop to counterfeiting; but  
now lead and tin are added to bronze  
in secret mints; it would be easier  
to simply use clay for coinage  
and not fool the people; bad and good  
cannot so combine, and remain concealed;  
on every city wall  
all over the country  
can we hear the blaring  
of army bugles; when  
will such sad sounds cease?

Tu Fu wrote this poem possibly in 769 A.D. after having been through a lifetime of wars and preparation for wars. He connects the richness of the official-gentry, the poverty of the people, and the drive for arms.

## SONG OF THE SILK WEAVERS AND HARVESTERS

Around all of our cities  
there are soldiers, and  
the clash of arms;

so does one feel  
how grand it would be  
could we but forge  
our weapons into tools  
for farmers to use;

so that every inch of land could  
be ploughed with oxen; then, with ploughing done,  
silkworms be gathered;

no need for soldiers to weep  
such pools of tears  
for dead heroes;  
rather  
from the men harvesting  
from the women spinning  
would there come back to us  
songs of happiness.

## THE WHITE HORSE

Out of the Northeast  
galloped a white charger

with saddle empty, but  
sticking into it, two arrows.

Pity the rider lost!  
For who now can admire  
his spirited prancing?

Last night he was the general  
giving orders for battle;  
just now he was killed;

war and its disorder bring death  
through many doors,

cries of bitterness, and tears  
like sleet in a winter's storm.

TSU YUNG

## LOOKING AT CHI MEN

We march out  
our hearts moved with emotion  
as we hear, back in our camp,  
the sound of flute and drum.

In front of us is bitterness;  
the wild snows are endless,  
at dawn they colour red and the reflection  
shines back on our banners.

There will be lonely nights in deserts  
with the beacons on our watch-towers  
throwing their beams in answer to the moon.

I remember at the city of Chi  
how the clouds lie along the city walls  
like waves along our home sea-coast;

and full of longing for home, I, but a simple lad,  
wonder if all this is necessary; why  
must we lay down the pen and pick up  
the sword?

*LI CHI*

## BALLAD OF ENLISTED MEN

A bright day in the Northwest, and we  
on a Great Wall mound look up and down the wall  
for beacon signals;

and under the gold light of the setting sun  
that glitters on the surface of the frontier river,  
our men water their horses.

Sometimes here, in the dust storms,  
when our drums beat  
we seem also to hear the music  
from the guitar of the princess  
given in marriage to a tribal king  
and playing in loneliness;

and in all the thousands of *li* no city  
only soldiers' camps; then the days of autumn  
when the rain begins to turn to snow and  
wild geese nightly fly southward over us.

Making even the tribesmen weep bitterly; we hear  
that the Yu Men Pass is still  
besieged by the enemy  
so must risk our lives; drive on the war chariots;

alas! every year our bones are buried  
outside the frontiers, while those of us  
who return

bring back nothing but a few poor seeds  
of the grapevine.\*

### AN OLD TALE

Subduing the frontier tribes  
has taken my boyhood  
in Yu and Yen.\*\*

We gambled for victory  
under the hoofs of their cavalry,  
one lad's life of little account.

We cut back the enemy so that they dared not advance  
wild-looking men we were with beards standing out  
like bristles on a hedgehog;

and under the scudding clouds the yellow dust storms  
blinded us: a hard, bleak life, yet  
with no victory, no hope of return to our homes.

In our camp  
a girl from Liaotung, just  
fifteen years old, skilled in song and dance  
played for us "The March Across the Frontier"  
on a tribesmen's flute

so that the tears of our soldiers  
fell gently, like rain.

\*Seeds of the grapevine: Grapes came from Central Asia and were brought back by soldiers returning to the capital.

\*\*Yu and Yen are approximately the areas in which modern Peking is today—where on the borders of Jehol Province the tribesmen enemy had to be met.

**HAN YU**

**A SONG IN THE OLD STYLE**

Why not make merry today  
when there is no longer war?  
Grumble not at all our troubles  
life is still bearable.

*The Reply*

If you can escape the taxes  
of your district; then I cannot  
escape military service in mine;  
when one district is flooded, you  
can escape to another; but with  
the world in flood, where can you go?

So get me good clothes  
food and drink; think not  
of the years to come; let  
us sit and make merry!

## WOUNDED SOLDIERS

The many wounded soldiers who trail  
over the road, without food, trying  
to reach home; tearing their hair and  
weeping disconsolately by old city walls,  
begging, displaying their wounds for  
passers-by to see; feeling, in the old war scars,  
pain, as the autumn winds blow cold.

## AN EVENING NEAR WUCHANG

A cloud opens and far off I see  
across the Yangtse the city of Hanyang—  
just one day's sail.

The river is smooth; it's easy to rest,  
but I lie awake and hear the voices of the boatmen say:  
the waves are rising, soon it will be rough.

And I think about all my days, trying to find security;  
how I have grown old, hair changing  
like the autumn leaves  
by the Hunan rivers I have travelled so often;  
and the moonlight makes me homesick,  
tired of my wandering life;

with all that I have done and would have done  
destroyed and lost in war; and now hearing  
from the far-off shore of the river  
war drums still beating,  
my heart fills with the sickness of despair.

*CHANG CHI*

WAR

That other year  
when we fought the Yueh Chih,  
outside the city our forces  
were shattered.

No news came from or went to the frontier,  
we who yet lived and those who had died  
cut off from each other

with none  
to take down tents and fold them  
while  
riderless horses came to a halt around  
forlorn banners;

doubting that you may still be alive,  
I desist from making you a funeral offering;  
yet looking over at the horizon, I cannot help  
shedding tears for you.

THE UNBORN CHILD

Autumn, and the Huns were slaughtering  
along the borders;

and all along the banks of the Liao River  
our men were wiped out; so that

over great distances there were none  
to collect the scattered bones of our dead;

and around the city, families  
tried to call in the spirits  
of the fallen to their graves.

A woman depends on her husband or son,  
to live together with them is a comfort  
even though we are poor and humble; but  
my husband is on the battlefield, and my son  
lies heavily in my womb, so I drag on  
my miserable life, like a candle in the daytime.

### THE EMPTY SADDLE

The hair of our heads had hardly  
come together in marriage, when  
you had to ride off into the distance  
leaving me alone; and now today  
the troops ride home and I know  
that you are dead, for another is on your horse,  
sitting in your saddle.

ON NEWS OF A FRIEND RETURNING FROM  
FRONTIER SERVICE

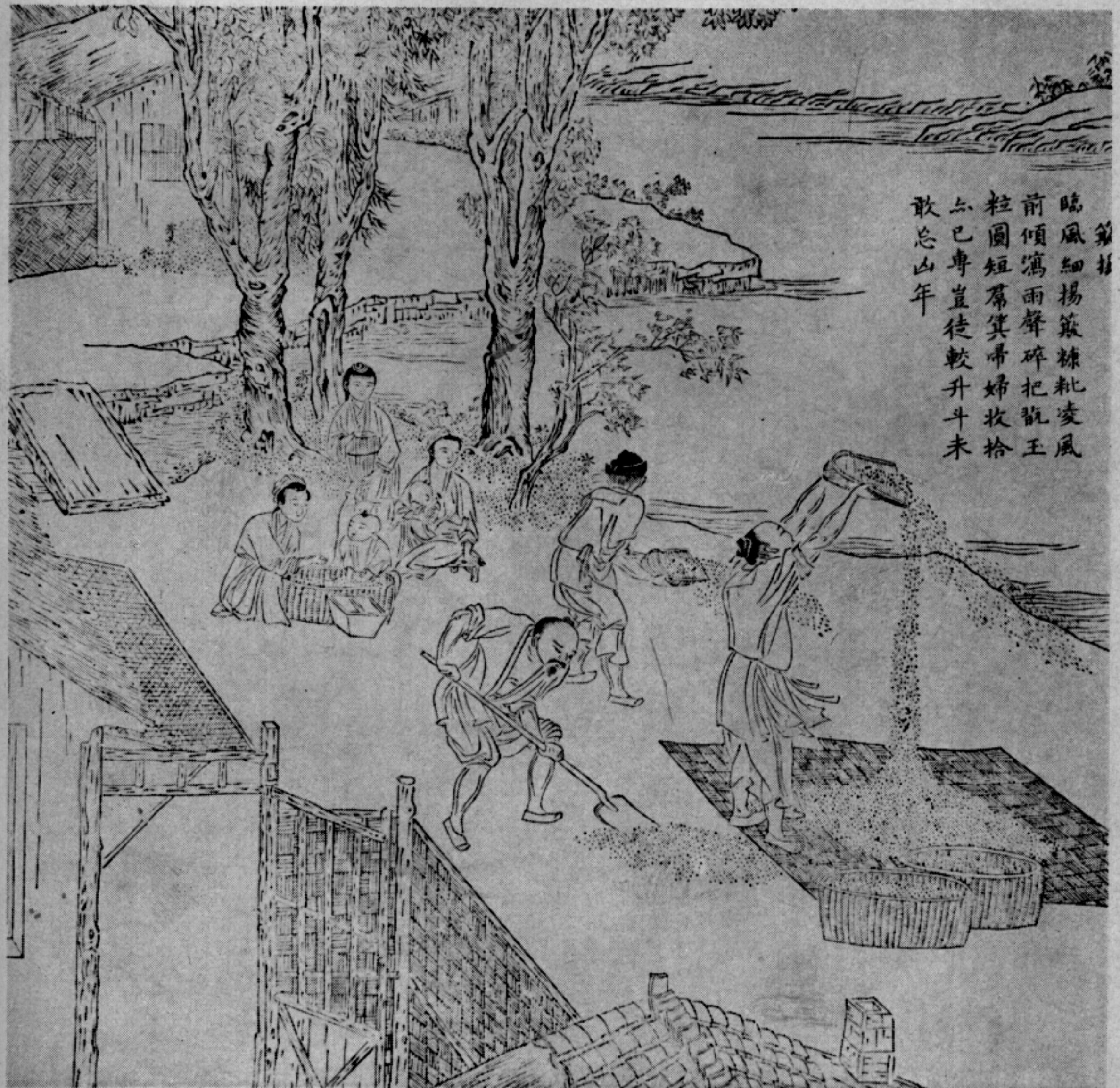
Before, it was thus—  
three years at the frontier  
and one at home on leave; but now  
it seems that no leave comes at all,  
and men fight on till they die  
on some battlefield.

Often I have wondered about you, who were  
not the kind of boy to make a soldier, to subdue  
tribesmen; and then, these days,  
the news of your returning  
was hard to believe.

Now since we have heard of your coming  
I'm always going to the top of the house  
to look out for signs of you.

Your brother is cleaning out the stable  
for your horse; your mother is mending  
your clothes, wondering fearfully if  
the news is really true, while I, all the time,  
watch the road, going even outside  
the city gate, carrying some wine  
in case you should come in thirsty; for I know  
that men and horses after all their work  
must be gaunt and weary.

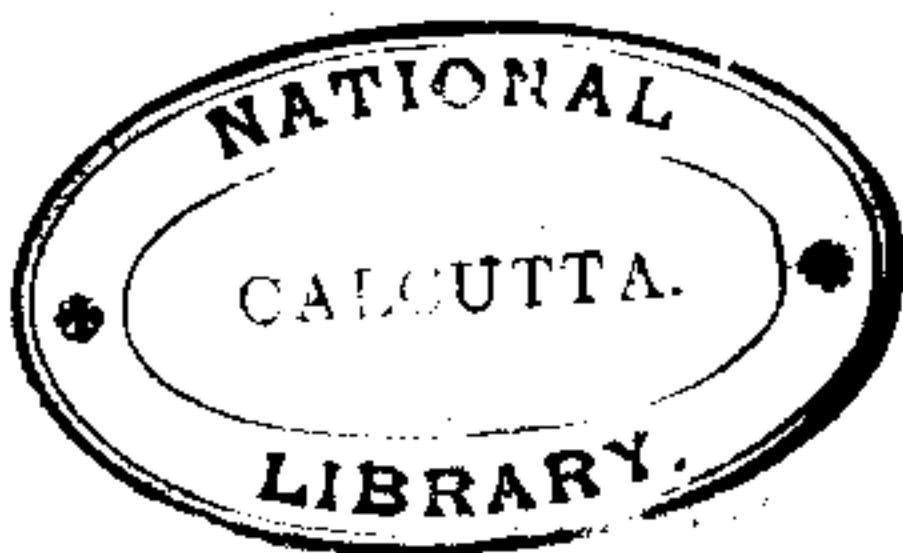
Ah, I wish I could somehow make the distance  
shorter, and so suddenly find you  
beside me; yet knowing that your tiredness  
and that of your horse will slow your coming;  
I can but hope you are not held too long  
so that soon shall I be released from the bitterness  
of uncertainty.



笠挂  
臨風細揚簸  
糠粃凌風  
前傾篠雨聲碎  
把龍王  
粒圓短  
簾箕啼婦收拾  
亦已專  
豈徒較升斗  
未  
敢忘山年

Winnowing

by Chiao Ping-cheng



This comes from a series of drawings portraying different tasks in the countryside. Chiao Ping-cheng was a court artist during the reign of Kang Hsi (1622-1722). The drawings were made into woodprints by Chu Kuei in 1699. There are twenty-three prints in all.

PAI CHU-YI

## A PEASANT PROTEST

In Hsinfeng County there lives  
an old man of eighty-eight; hair  
falling from his head and from his  
eyebrows, white as snow;

leaning with his left arm  
on his grandson, he passes by  
the inn; then can one see  
the right arm is useless, so asks  
how did this happen, when and where—  
and he will answer thus:

“I was born  
in Hsinfeng County  
when rule was good and we were at peace  
when we listened to songs by the court musicians,  
not even knowing the use  
of weapons; then all at once came the Imperial  
demand for soldiers; out of every three men  
one must go.

Where were we to go? we asked,  
and heard  
that we were to march in the heat of summer  
to Yunnan where  
there are certain waters from which  
when blossoms fall, arise malarial mists;

and when a great army crossed  
the water was boiling, and of every ten  
two or three would die in the crossing.

So all around our village there arose  
sounds of crying as men were taken  
from their families to fight the Yunnan  
tribesmen; of the vast numbers who have gone  
already, none have returned. Now I am old,  
but then I was twenty-four and my name  
was on the list of men to go; so in the night  
and by myself in secret I took a great stone hammer  
and shattered my arm; so that  
I could not use a bow nor bear a standard;  
and so I was not sent to Yunnan but released;  
painful, but the only way to get discharge  
and remain at home;

though now for over sixty years  
I have been disabled, yet am I still  
alive and well; only in bad weather  
when there is wind and rain, the old wound  
becomes too sore for me to sleep;

yet this is better than crossing  
the Yunnan waters, dying and lying  
with bones scattered; becoming one  
of those Yunnan ghosts that mournfully  
look for home amongst the graves  
of lost armies."

Listen carefully to this old man  
for in his words there is something  
to be learnt.

You know that the prime minister  
in the period of Kai Yuan, did not  
encourage frontier aggression;

but then came the period  
of Tien Pao, and Yang Kuo-chung who  
sought for the Emperor's favour  
by winning a military victory; but  
what he got was no victory—  
only the hatred of the people, as  
witness here, the old man with  
a broken arm.

## BROTHERS SEPARATED

These are bitter days,  
hands that can find no industry,  
famine that stalks, chaos  
that follows war.

So we brothers are now parted,  
on all sides the desolate, wasted land  
bears witness to the fury of war.

The people straggle along the roads,  
I with my shadow for company, like a wild goose  
lost from his flock and flying alone—  
thinking of our family of brothers,  
uprooted from our home  
and like the thistledown of autumn  
scattered to the winds.

Tonight we will all be looking at the brightness  
of the same moon,\* tonight our tears will flow like  
rain;  
we five, our hearts one in longing  
for home.

## GRASS

The grass grows tall and green  
yet each year it withers and dies away  
only to come again in the spring; even  
burn it and still it cannot be destroyed, for  
the spring wind will bring it in fresh again.

Its sweetness lies over  
an ancient road where pomp  
once strutted; its verdure  
hides the ruin of the city  
torn by war;  
waving in the breeze  
it bows out so definitely the princes  
and the bygone generals; and luxuriantly  
awaits the people, so certain to return.

\*In Chinese literature moonlight is associated with thoughts of home.

A SOLDIER'S LAMENT

All my life, it seems, has been spent  
fighting on the frontier  
by the Chin River, at Yu Men Kuan

ever, as soldiers must,  
with hands grasping whips  
or sword hilts;

and each year

the snow melts on the gravemounds  
of our comrades  
who have died here; then each year in spring  
we see them turn green again;

and for ever along the border regions  
we ride; watch the Hwang Ho\* flowing  
endlessly around Hei Shan.\*\*

\*Hwang Ho, the Yellow River.

\*\*Hei Shan, the Black Mountain.

*LI HO\**

**SONG OF THE ARROW HEAD AT CHANGPING\*\***

Black spots like coal, white ones like  
bone ash; red like those of a red sand;  
a coppery pattern of ancient blood-stains  
stands out; the weather of the years  
has destroyed the golden shaft and the  
white feather at its end; so there remains  
only the three-edged arrow head, like  
a wolf's tooth.

Over the plain our two horses plod  
east of the remount station, on  
through the stony buckwheat fields against  
an unceasing wind; the winter day  
is short, and the stars come out; flecks  
of cloud, like black flags, stream  
through the wide night sky.

The spirits of the dead seem all  
around us, so we stop, make offerings of milk and soup;  
the insects have become  
silent, though wild geese are crying amongst the  
gleaming red reeds; a wind springs up again  
and blows the gloaming fire; a sign  
to bid me farewell; and I reflect  
on looking for relics over so wide a space,

\*Li Ho was one of the brilliant young men of the Tang dynasty,  
who started writing poems at the age of seven and died twenty years  
later.

\*\*Changping, now in Hopei, where the famous general of the first  
Emperor of Chin, Pai Chi, buried alive 400,000 soldiers of Chao.

finding only this arrow head ; then thinking  
how horribly it must have sped,  
swiftly cutting and piercing  
living flesh.

On his horse  
comes a boy from the city  
lightly advising me to buy a shaft  
to make it a complete arrow again.

#### AT PING CHENG\*

At the frontier city of Ping Cheng  
each night there is moonlight, and  
we shiver with cold and hunger ; we  
with our plain swords  
at our sides and the wind from the sea blowing  
through our hair.

We look along the Great Wall  
running into the distant horizon,  
our red flags at each redoubt ;  
and from the tents of our generals  
comes the sound of flutes ; fog  
and mist wet our standards ; day  
and night we stand at our posts  
on the wall, looking down  
at the same old sights below us,  
the wind blowing the dried-up  
weeds hither and thither ; while

\*From the walls of the city the soldiers were looking out along  
the Great Wall.

in the city, our thin  
cavalry mounts neigh.

We ask the officer in charge of the Wall  
how far we are from the pass near home;

so we muse, "It is better to die on  
the battlefield, than of all this  
bitter cold and hunger."

**WAR**

**Our hills, our rivers, our fertile lands  
are now but details on a soldier's map.**

**Our people are dispirited by war; and  
can make no plan to revive  
their crafts.**

**So no sense to listen to much talk  
of promotions through military merit  
on the official scale;**

**for already I have learned that a general's fame  
stands on a pile of dry bones  
of what were once the people.**

**HSU HUN**

**BY THE FRONTIER POST**

Night fighting north of Sang Kan  
so bitter that half our soldiers  
did not return.

With the morning came  
messages from home, telling  
of the sending of winter clothes.

The intense cold of the Northwest frontier regions in the winter  
made the matter of padded clothing one of paramount importance.

*TSUI TAO-YUNG*

## SPRING WITH THE WOMEN AT HOME

To test if I can work  
I try to make paper cuts,  
but the cold of spring is in the scissors,  
so they are not easy to use; then  
I get to wondering whereabouts, after all,  
is Liaoyang, where he is fighting? And if  
I ever get this padded coat made,  
will it ever reach him?

**LIU CHIA**

**FRONTIER ARMIES MARCH THROUGH**

Past our city the cavalry rides;  
the city dwellers are not worried,  
sleeping securely on the upper floors  
of their homes;

and the officials rush round to supply  
all that is needed, fearing only  
that our farmers' lands will not  
produce enough to please.

The young gallants demand  
fat meat and for their horses  
new grain; and stuff themselves  
with all they can eat, wishing they had  
two stomachs, instead of one; and there is still  
plenty left over;

when the troops went the grass was green  
by the time they returned it had withered;

tired of their struggles to subdue the tribesmen  
they came back bringing their prisoners; so now  
there are even more of them.

This Tang poet, writing of the war to subdue the western Jung tribes of an earlier time, pictures a problem recurring throughout China's feudal history—the poor people bearing the brunt of war, the soldiers eating off the land as they march through.

In later times I have seen Kuomintang soldiers beating farmers to make them dig up grain they had buried for safety and taking off the animals on which they depended for a living; and the landlord class sleeping comfortably through it all in their city houses.

**SZEMA CHA**

## **THE OLD SOLDIER LOOKS BACK**

Land at home, but no way to get back  
to plough it; sleeping here  
in this frontier city, dreaming  
of the pleasant smell of rice at harvest—

then back to the reality  
of the evil smell of blood after battle.

Yet the Emperor of Han, in the depths  
of his palace, still thinks to extend his domains!

so over half of the great plains  
beacons flare; and in every home  
the call comes to send men for war.

We know that the lands at the border are not fertile  
and we wonder why we fight  
to gain so much waste ground;

it is futile to lead good farmers to die  
to be scattered under the tribesmen's swords.

**ANONYMOUS**

**THE WIDOW**

It was a morning to be remembered,  
the cocks all crowing, the air so full of frost;  
he, buckling on his sword, shouldering his pack,  
the little officials, like fierce animals,  
hounding the conscripts off; we could not  
talk together then; and in the dust of the troops  
departing, I stood desolate, thinking it were better  
to be dead; then going inside and looking  
at our baby crying on the bed and thinking  
that in spite of all my misery, I must rear him;  
and sending all my clothing and ornaments  
to an old neighbour to sell;

in farewell I told him to go his way  
without worry; that I would sooner die  
than take another man; he answering  
that alive would he do his best, dead  
would he close his eyes in peace;

now our lad is nineteen  
has finished schooling and can seek work;  
I have felt like a dew-drop on a branch  
waiting the time to fall;  
now it has come  
and I must find you, for your hair will  
be turning white.

Outside my room  
dawn glimmers, the bugles blow,

black clouds race in front of a dull moon;  
and my solitary lamp shines cold.

Then a sound like the stir of some insect and  
in the doorway a ghostly shape stands; suddenly  
the smell of blood fills the room, and there  
in its hand it holds a skull, all covered  
with dust and gore; and I tell it, if it is my husband  
prove it, come in; and  
a gust of wind sways its clothing.  
They are the clothes he wore  
on parting; so it is he and I ask him  
why he came so late....

then by my bed, the light suddenly  
goes out;\* and straight from the rafters  
I hung myself; wondering how he had  
come those thousands of *li* from the desert—  
hoping in the same way to go there and see  
his white bones on the battlefield.

\*In Chinese superstition, whenever a ghost appears the lamplight  
begins to fade, or goes out entirely.



## **V. THE SUNG DYNASTY**

### **960-1279**

*This period, running from the middle of the tenth century to near the middle of the thirteenth century, was another period of splendour, marked at its close by aggressive war started by the predatory armies from the pastoral North and Northwest.*



**SU SHIH**

## **KUNYANG CITY**

Through the coloured clouds over  
a wide, flat plain, one may see  
a solitary city, standing like a rock.

Winds blow sand through the scrub  
around it; towers have fallen and gates  
broken asunder; yet the old roads  
still are there. The farmers who now  
cultivate this plain know nothing;  
not even that here was fought  
the battle of Kunyang, where in the lust  
of a few moments came lasting death  
to a hundred thousand men.

Yet here it was that the chariots  
of the government in power, came swirling in  
like swift clouds over the sea, tearing  
through the undergrowth, setting loose tigers  
and leopards to add to the disorder; Wang Mang  
staked the whole empire on this one battle  
expecting to make it decisive; yet did the tide  
begin to turn against him; with surrender being  
refused, his men began to fear; then suddenly  
from the city, a thousand cavalry emerged  
and charged against the center; Wang Mang's generals  
laughed at first in derision, at the small numbers  
but soon they began to flee, casting away  
drums and weapons, and there they were  
hacked down; none able to tell one

from the other, except by some ornament  
of jade or gold.

CHEN YU-YI

## NIGHT VIGIL

Our boats we anchored by Hua Jung County  
and over the lake spread the brightness  
of a moonlit night; too cold to sleep  
I stood pondering, listening to the sound  
of reeds rustling around us; thinking  
of all the disappointments of my life  
which make even this beautiful scene  
one of foreboding; and now in the third watch  
watching fireflies over the gravemounds  
looking up into the heavens at the Milky Way  
hiding the great unknown behind it, and remembering  
that here it was that Tsao Tsao, King of Wei,  
was brought to bay, with now, only the quiet  
majesty of hills and rivers as a memorial; so  
does one ponder over rise and decline  
thinking that it is in vain for a poor scholar  
like me, to feel so anxious for a better world;  
yet what can we do about all the wars? No  
clear solution can I find, though my hair has turned  
so grey.



## VI. THE MONGOL (OR YUAN) DYNASTY 1280-1368

*The Mongol dynasty was the period of the complete domination of China by the Mongols.*

*Kublai Khan became the first emperor of the Mongol dynasty, ruling from Peking to the Black Sea.*

*In England, Chaucer was writing poetry, and from Italy, Marco Polo came, as did many other foreigners during this period, to enter the service of Kublai Khan as an official.*

*The poets of the Mongol dynasty reflect the same protest against suffering inflicted on the ordinary people by conscription for wars that serve no useful purpose and the depredations of corrupt military officials.*



**SUNG CHIU-CHIA**

**THE CONSCRIPT**

Lazing away the day  
under the shade of a willow tree,  
wearing neither cap nor socks;  
drinking wine in the morning  
in one village, then again in the evening  
at another; suddenly being seized  
escorted to an office,  
shoved on to a blind horse\*  
promptly marched off  
to the very centre  
of the battlefield.

\*If a man owned a horse the animal was conscripted along with him.

*HO CHING*

## THE OLD WAR-HORSE

Veteran of a hundred battles,  
with strength now spent; and  
great spirit reduced to quietude;  
a hanging head and aging bones;

but thinking still  
of those great marches;  
of all those years patrolling  
frontier roads, slowly, methodically,  
through dust and wind,  
past frontiers.

And now the story is ended,  
the instrument broken;

and he whinnies as he remembers  
the broken voices of gallant soldiers  
who have sung from his back.

*HSIN YUAN*

**AFTER THE WAR**

The armies have departed  
the people return;

flowers come into blossom  
when snows have melted.

All over the barren fields withered  
grasses lie; but it is good  
to see smoke rising once again  
from peasant homes.

Hungry rats squeak in empty walls  
hungry birds look for grain  
in the desolate fields.

Then suddenly, from all sides, there is  
the sound of voices in confusion;  
county officials have come to collect  
money for taxes.

## *CHIEH HSI-SZE*

### **THOUGHTS AT KAOYU\***

The city wall of Kaoyu seems long  
and from it one looks over the country  
at the wide fields of grain, then down  
at the mulberry trees around the city

in the olden days the land was hard as iron  
but now it has changed to sown fields;  
one hopes that for all the years to come  
peace will remain within all our borders;

Then the mulberry trees would become  
still thicker,  
the wide fields of wheat  
still more vast;

and from then on, we should not need  
fortifications or moats  
for protection.

\*Kaoyu is a city on the Grand Canal, in northern Kiangsu, just north of Yangchow, where Marco Polo was an official. It is the centre of rich farm lands.

*CHANG CHU*

## IN THE WAKE OF WAR

Some fifteen years ago there stood  
on the east bank of the River Huai,  
the lofty homes of Yangchow, known  
for their loveliness, and now the sad  
memories of music and song;

then came war and consuming flames  
tore through the city, leaving utter  
destruction;

now there is no news from relatives  
or friends, to say who is dead, who  
alive; when shall all these wars come  
to an end? Would that I could return  
to Yangchow, and let my tears flow  
down to the Yangtse River.

**LU TSE-YU**

**ANOTHER LETTER**

Still in the army, with my hair  
getting greyer;  
carrying out routine, but thinking  
of the pleasure I could have, fishing  
in our rivers and lakes; and another  
autumn coming, making me  
count up all the years  
lost, and remember that when I sent you  
the last letter, it was autumn also.

Boundless the frozen sky, and a lonely cloud  
crosses the distant horizon; the lone goose  
flying south makes autumn more gloomy; friends  
of my old village may miss me, though  
their feelings cannot compare with my longing  
for them.

## VII. THE MING DYNASTY

*1368-1644*

*The peasant boy who dreamed in the sun on the back of his water buffalo became the first emperor of the Ming dynasty and drove out the Mongols, who had become effete through luxury.*

*The Ming dynasty lasted another three hundred years and was one of great prosperity and high culture until it, too, began to decline.*

*The great peasant revolution led by Li Tse-cheng from Yenan was suppressed (after the Ming emperor had hung himself) by the militarist Wu San-kuei only by calling in the Manchu cavalry from the northeast.*



## THE OLD SPEAR-HEAD

At Chang-an, the farmers ploughing  
brought to the light of day again  
an ancient spear-head, on it  
writing too worn to be read.

A pity it was not as bright  
as those perfect specimens  
that gleam like stars; but

I know not much about such things; this one  
with its cold colours, repels me—  
gives me to think more deeply  
on the bitterness of war, that ever  
continues.

In history there were those who slaughtered  
the people of one state, and then in turn  
were slaughtered by others;  
dynasties rose and fell  
only the sunsets on the Great Wall  
have remained unchanged.

I put my hand over the spear-head and ask  
why? why? through all these years  
have they made the good metal into such  
dreadful, hateful things, and not  
into bells and cymbals,  
into beautiful vessels man can use; why

shape the metal  
only to kill?

It is lucky that you have been dug up  
in peace time, when old weapons  
are melted down to make farming tools;  
would then that such peace could be  
maintained for ever, so that  
swords and spears would fall out of use.

*LIU CHI*

## THE COMMAND

The soldier and his wife  
spoke together;  
with his last word he said:

“I do not know  
how soon I shall be killed;  
if you would console  
me in Hades

bring him up well—  
our son.”

## **AO YING**

### **WHEN?**

**On the banks of the river, the sound of  
cold waters runs over  
white sands.**

**The moon hides behind  
the city wall; twilight  
and the sound of a flute  
make for melancholy.**

**Duties for the night begin;  
standards lowered, tents struck,  
insignia collected,**

**I wonder bleakly  
when will these battles be stopped  
and we return home?**

WANG SHIH-CHEN

## THE DEAD

In all the world  
is there anything to compare with this?  
One day—and the slaughter of four  
hundred thousand men. Why! should  
their bones be piled on one heap  
they would make a mountain as high  
as the snows of Tai Hang Shan;\*  
and the blood that was shed would be  
enough to swell a great river of purple.

On the plains they lay thickly  
crows eating their fill, until  
gorged they slept drunkenly.  
Even up to this day the place  
seems haunted, say the farmers,  
who still talk of this old tragedy  
and show bits of ancient weapons  
crusted with the green patina of time.

There are other places  
where the spirits of the dead  
have not yet dispersed—too many  
such battle-grounds. Have you not  
heard of Hsin An, where it is said  
that in one night, the shades  
of two hundred thousand move  
unhappily? Yet from one dynasty to another  
war still goes on.

\*Tai Hang Shan is a mountain range in southeastern Shansi especially famous in the recent anti-Japanese War of Resistance as an Eighth Route Army stronghold.

## KAO CHI

### A WIDOW'S LAMENT

My husband was unhappy when ordered to arms; knowing well he would be sent far away to fight; yet there was nothing he could do but obey.

Then in the springtime I had bad dreams about him made into ghastly truth by a letter from his commander saying that truly he was dead and that his clothes were being kept.

If I knew the way to Wuwei\* in that distant northwest, I would go and search for his bones and bring them home. But as I know not, I can but cut a paper guide to call back his soul, performing the rites where we last saw him off.

\*Wuwei, called Liangchou at some periods, is a city in western Kansu—273 kilometres west of Lanchow.

## THE BETTER WAY

Sunset over the plains of Wuyuan and I look over the wildness, where the ruined redoubts stand, thinking:

now because of this war there is conscription in the rear; everywhere men have been taken off the land and turned into soldiers; last year we fought at Fei Hu and this year we go to Yun Chung; yet of all the land our armies have taken how much is useful for ploughing? What have we gained by all this killing?

From this high point I see, spread far below me, the long, wild grass— and with a sigh, I wonder what is the meaning of it all?

## THE LETTER AND CLOTHES

Although the army issue of clothing has some warmth, these that I send you will fit you better.

I send them so far,  
all the way to the desert sands.

I fear that by the time you receive them it will be already spring.



## VIII. THE MANCHU (OR CHING) DYNASTY

**1644-1911**

*The Manchus now took over all China as their own and ruled for another period of nearly three hundred years, becoming more or less absorbed as Chinese.*

*In the latter part of the dynasty the impact of the West on the coast of China began to take the place of raids from tribesmen's cavalry from the north, and especially from 1840 onwards foreign imperialist pressure became increasingly heavy.*

*Towards the end of the period there was the great peasant revolution known as the Taiping Uprising (Taiping means "peace") which the utterly corrupt Manchus were only able to suppress because of the assistance of the Western imperialist powers, at a cost of some sixty million Chinese lives.*



**SHEN TEH-CHIEN**

**ALONG THE FRONTIER**

**I**

At night, the long cries of wild geese  
and ducks bring mournful thoughts;  
the never-ceasing wind blows the sand  
into drifts; drinking our bowls  
of buttered tea after sunset, we watch  
the moon rise over Li Ling Tai.

**II**

Near the head of the stream they call Tse Leh  
some of our garrison were at practice;  
while in the Valley of Gazelles, flags  
were already leading others into action;  
a dust storm came in long clouds, so that  
all was dark; then as the wind abated,  
snow fell so deep that our soldiers  
could no longer find their way back  
to camp.

**III**

Soldiers marched over the vast distances  
to Hami, in Sinkiang, to Kanchou in western Kansu,  
hating to hear the calls of wild geese  
heralding winter, or of the bugles

**sounding warnings; our two hundred thousand men turned their heads towards their native land, finding that the source of the Yellow River lies far across the deserts.**

## **IV**

**Fronting us are the great deserts and vast mountain ranges; hardly places for men, rather those where one burns autumn grasses so that the tribesmen's horses may not come to graze; a place where for us life becomes so bitter that we weep blood; singing sadly an ancient ballad together under the moonlight, and thinking of home.**

**CHAO YI**

**TAIWAN**

Before us, as far as the eye could reach  
lay the boundless ocean, with the water  
seeming to touch the sky;

our soldiers were keen and spirited;  
as night came  
they lit torches dipped in oil, lightening  
the darkness;  
the waves turned red and the eyes of fishes  
gleamed like little stars.

In the tropical heat  
tiny villages, destitute and  
full of malaria  
cut our numbers

and only the ghosts of heroes  
marched with us to the battle-ground;  
while the undergrowth was found to be filled  
with the hidden enemy.

And when would subjection  
be completed? Let us reflect on  
all the other southern expeditions  
of our history.



## IX. MODERN TIMES

*Since 1912*

*The Republic of China, set up in 1912 under the leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, was taken over by reactionary militarists who ran the country in their own interests, giving way to foreign imperialism to maintain their hold.*

*Widespread distress followed, but during the same period Sun Yat-sen was organizing a government in the south which, strengthened by the Chinese Communist Party, overthrew in the Northern Expedition of 1926-7 the feudal militarists.*

*After the success of the Northern Expedition, Chiang Kai-shek, into whose hands the leadership of the Kuomintang eventually fell following the death of Sun Yat-sen, turned on all communist and progressive sections and after a period of massacre and repression set up his own government of big bankers and landlords who received the support of Western imperialism and were also willing collaborators of Japan.*

*The people, however, forced the government to resist further Japanese demands and insisted upon a united front with the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies (later the People's Liberation Army) and in spite of repeated betrayals of the united front by the Kuomintang the Japanese imperial army was finally defeated.*

*After the Japanese surrender, Chiang Kai-shek, against the desire for peace of the war-weary people of all China, launched an all-out attack on the liberated areas. Led by Chairman Mao Tse-tung, the people finally overthrew Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary rule. The People's Republic of China was formally inaugurated on October 1, 1949. The policy of the People's Government is resistance to aggression and co-operation with all peoples who are for peace and construction—thus putting into practical effect the desires and aspirations of the Chinese people throughout these three thousand years.*



IN THE LIGHT OF REASON  
*Song of the Dove of Peace*

Everywhere, no matter what country  
there are doves like me; so may I  
understand the language of any land;  
so would I in the four seasons of  
the year, soar through the heavens,  
over all the seas, fearing no vulture  
no eagle, no American aeroplane;

and in these few days I have flown  
into the Hotel in Peking, where in the  
meeting hall, now become like some  
boundless sea, the delegates from more than  
twenty countries in the Asian and  
Pacific regions, sit around a great oval table;

I come to rest in the middle of  
a great green rug, hung at the end  
of the hall; under me flowers are set  
each side of me, tall palms have  
been brought to grace; in front of each  
delegation are set tiny flags, that stand  
like more flowers in bloom.

So peaceful a picture, like  
a harmonious poem; no one wants to have  
increased armaments, nor to declare war;  
all want peaceful co-existence, without  
blockades and embargoes, free flow

for trade; no one wants aggression or slavery; all want life, not death;

I hear the solemn opening speech from China's delegate; then the closing one from the Soviet Union; the declaration read by the delegate from Australia; Pakistan reading the resolutions;

four days of solemn meeting, in harmony in freedom; Japanese and Korean delegates shoulder to shoulder; American and Soviet delegates, arm in arm; in the light of reason contradictions melted, and the common will made for unanimous agreement;

so good-bye to you, protectors of peace; I am flying now to Berlin; and until this autumn shall I say good-bye, and then I shall come back, and we shall talk intimately; then the weather will be fine and all the crops will be ripe, let us at that time gather in a great harvest for peace, peace, peace.

PROTECT PEACE

I

In the morning when I awakened  
I heard the sound of birds a-singing;  
getting up, I pushed open the window  
yet did not catch a glimpse of the singers;  
only between the branches of a tree  
seeing the dawn breaking, dew-drops between  
the leaves glinting with the light of morning;  
through the evergreen creepers on the wall  
came a little breeze, gently moving the leaves;

and on the other side of the wall  
lies a maternity hospital; listen!  
on this clear morning, comes  
the sound of faint but touching cries  
of some new-born babe; another new life  
has come into the world;

and quietly in the lane outside  
road sweepers are cleaning the road  
so well; passing them, flocks of  
school children, wearing every kind  
of coloured clothing, hand in hand and  
with laughing voices, go to this local  
primary school; farmers come with two  
handcarts, filled with the fruits  
of their labours, carrying something

of the dew of the suburbs, into the vegetable market!

factory whistles blow sending out their happy summons; from this side and then that, come many such sounds, echoing each other and among the high poplars, stand factory chimneys; from them comes smoke like long tails of horses racing; numberless workmen, with voices raised, and with swift strides, go along the roads leading to the chimneys and enter the factory gates; on the power lines, insulators gleam white; like so many flowers threaded together; hung in the blue of the heavens throwing the reflections of the sun down on the streets;

a bunch of little girls riding bicycles, facing the sun, with happy shouts, speed over the ground;

on the main street, busy people and vehicles flow along like the waters of a river sending out all the sounds of a great city, blended together like those of some great symphony orchestra; songs of labour, a choir of production;

## II

this is a city that has come back to life; a city liberated from the grasp of the enemy; one that has been stamped over by the aggressors, suffering so much disgrace; this city is like the body of a man, torn by the claws of wild beasts, with wounds that have just been healed;

this city through the long night of tyranny became paralyzed; now it has begun to awaken, and be itself through the efforts of the great working class and its enthusiasm for construction; now has this city begun to lift its head;

daily, workers dig deeply down into the earth and descend to repair sewers, clearing out the refuse of ages, connecting all drainage;

daily, workers with their welding sets, sit through the night without rest in the middle of flashing sparks welding the tram tracks;

daily, workers on the ruins of houses demolished by war start to build up homes again;

if you go to the suburbs of the city  
to the wide fields or country places  
nearby, or else to further localities  
all over the liberated areas, in liberated  
cities, villages, there you will see  
all the strength of the people's hands  
healing the wounds of war;

this the people's will for peace, with  
all they have done, directed  
towards this end;  
our wars, over all the past hundred  
years, all directed towards the victory  
of peace; yet not the kind of peace  
that comes from kneeling and begging,  
not that which comes from weeping;  
peace  
not just some blessing showered from heaven,  
peace  
not just something that comes  
out of its own free will like doves;  
for us peace is something won  
putting forth all the stubborn strength  
of a great people; this peace  
cost us much blood; for this peace  
have we sacrificed tens of millions  
of lives; so that our country has come  
to understand the value of peace; for  
those who have been through the long  
and evil dreams of the dark night  
know how to love  
the beauty of a quiet morning;

### III

but

one thinks of a great building  
supported by shining columns; yet  
with these columns inwardly eaten  
by white ants; then looks towards  
the war-makers of the world, stealthily  
sharpening their weapons, waiting  
for that moment when people are unprepared  
then swooping down for murder;

in Washington

in London

leaders of the old gang

sit; like slave-traders

or opium-runners, discussing

all their secret plans; how

to evolve more dreadful weapons

that will murder more men, how

to occupy more military bases;

how to get their munitions taken

by reactionary groups in foreign

countries; how to suppress

the people, send out secret agents,

buy up the traitors of the people,

smash the construction of New

Democracies; using as their tools

gold dollars, slander, murder,

atoms, gas and germs; together

with those scamps Tito, Rajk, Trotskyites

who are their most useful weapons,

for all the shameful business

of starting new wars, to throw

all the people of the world into

the fiery pit, so that they, the gangsters,

may expand their colonial empire,  
all the world becoming their slaves,  
and so let more profit come  
to the merchants of death ; none  
could be more brutal  
and greedy than these, worse scoundrels  
than Hitler even ; that they should remain  
alive, a disaster for all men ;

#### IV

resist  
these loafers and bandits,  
oppose their intrigue for new wars,  
oppose pacts against the people  
in the Atlantic and in the Pacific ;

all peace fighters must combine ; all  
oppressed peoples join together ; so shall  
all these people of the five continents  
seeking the welfare of mankind  
be united

round the Soviet Union and her allies  
round the figure of the Great Stalin  
and the everlasting victorius people  
of the USSR ; with the people of China  
who have stood up and those of  
the New Democracies ;  
together

we will put forth all our strength  
to halt war ;

all the workers of the world, unite  
to use together the strength of our  
arms ; to change the fate of humanity ;

not allowing the enemy to push us  
into the abyss; soldiers of the imperialist  
countries, American soldiers

British soldiers

French soldiers

this is the moment for you to awake;  
the wounds on your body have only just  
healed; do you still wish to die?

you have been

to the Philippine Islands,  
you have been to Greece,  
you have been to Iran,  
you have been to China,  
and also Japan; except for  
gaining the hatred of millions of people  
what exactly have you gained?

Nothing else!

Nothing at all!

While the medals on MacArthur's breast  
were glittering  
tens of thousands of you were wiped out;

and we—

we are numberless;  
and we are all as one body  
the peoples of the whole world  
who do not want war;

but should there be a day  
when war does come, then there  
will be no question of fear; we are  
ready for any struggle needed; and we have  
complete confidence in victory;

our hungry guns,  
our ammunition so full of hatred

our angry though now silent-lying explosives; all of these are waiting for the aggressor who would dare to invade our homeland.

SHIH FANG-YU

THE STRONGEST NOTE FOR PEACE

I

From Stockholm there came a sound  
the strongest sound in all our world  
like some storm rising from Baltic shores  
driving through to the Gobi Desert  
over the mines of Donbas, then to  
the People's Liberation Army of China,  
down through the plantations of Latin America  
then back to the fishermen of Norway;

we are the common people; though  
the Wall Street bosses have never  
heard our names they are written down  
on the peace petition;

and to them we point directly; for  
we shall not allow them to use  
shell cases filled with our fresh blood  
to assuage their thirst;

nor shall we permit farmers  
from the banks of the Mississippi  
to be put against the collective farmers  
of the Ukraine;

we are the common people but not  
to be encroached upon because our name  
happens to be "the people" we do not

encroach upon the rights of others; and we are of all those in our world the great majority; so that in all the world our voice is the most powerful; we do not have to beg for peace, we can command men not to go to war;

## II

and we can surely control those bandits who wear long-tailed coats and those who carry the sign of the cross yet are murderers; those who gamble with the lives of the people calculating profit and loss in their blood;

in the Pentagon, in Washington, they take the Pacific and divide it up as though it were an American lake, turning the Philippine Islands and Japan into bases for B-29's; thinking that tomorrow they can light a fire to consume the whole world, gardens, libraries, nurseries, everything; making wives into widows; creating pitiful mothers with tears in their beautiful eyes weeping over children who have lost their fathers; we must control such people halt the crimes they plan;

America  
just this one country, we address and ask  
where is your Jefferson, your Lincoln?

The world has read your writings—  
your Declaration of Independence,  
the stories of Mark Twain  
and the poems of Whitman;  
in the past, naively, one felt  
that when one captain left the bridge  
another must arise;

but  
old America, when one  
puts all the pictures  
of pin-up girls together  
with the “Leaves of Grass,”  
and the American Constitution  
alongside the speeches of a Truman,  
I seem to hear your ancestors  
weeping under the sod;

old America,  
you stand so magnificently beside  
the shores of the Atlantic, but  
the flame from the torch held by  
the Statue of Liberty is already  
extinguished and over your green  
plains appear the hoof prints  
of devils;

with your hospitals, already  
preparing germs for destruction  
among mankind; your zoological  
gardens, specializing in police dogs  
to hunt men; your laboratories, used

to research new means for murder;  
your papers that publish pictures  
of night club dancers kissing men  
fooled into army service; with those  
who escaped death on far-off Pacific  
islands, in World War II, now with heads  
lying on icy cold rocks in Korea,  
dreaming sweetly of return to their  
California;

old America,  
you cannot go on doing things like this;  
Robeson, the great singer, has sung protest  
so deeply; your own people are warning you;  
in front of the counters in your banks  
stand your housewives, with their undernourished  
kids; just bits of paper inscribed in blood  
and tears, with words of struggle;

from them cannot be raised new taxes  
to pay for atom bombs, police dogs;  
they will not always allow their sons  
to die in the wilderness of some  
foreign land; one has seen the dockers  
climbing to the top of electric light  
poles, raising high over the streets  
of New York the banners of peace;  
one can still hear the sound  
of a woman's weeping as she heard of troops  
being sent to Korea, beating her head  
against the columns of White House,  
demanding that Truman return to her  
her only son;

old America, your volcano  
will soon erupt; if a Truman or

a Marshall dares to start a fire  
miners will stride from their mines  
bringing the explosive they use  
for their work; the locomotive drivers  
will drive their engines through  
to Washington; soldiers will come back  
from the front lines; Negroes will rise  
and tear the electric chairs to pieces;  
women who tend their families will advance  
from their kitchens;

should you today make  
new wars, old America—  
your own people, will advance  
on to the White House and the Pentagon;  
as in the First World War the workers  
of Russia smashed open the gates  
of the Winter Palace;

### III

winds howl  
great waves break  
everywhere in the Pacific  
lie dangerous coral reefs;

old America,  
your ship must turn around;  
the good men of Louis Taruc  
are already in the forests  
of the Philippines, digging  
a grave for you; Ho Chi Minh  
and Vo Nguyen Giap, shall bury your corpse  
by those of the French aggressors;

Fujiyama will erupt  
taking away the snow that lies  
so heavily on its peak, burning you  
to death; we shall not let you go;  
nowhere shall we let you go; should  
you dare carry out aggression on  
this China, four hundred and seventy  
million people will rise, and take  
your fox hide as a prize of war;

the blaze set by Truman has been burning  
amongst the grain fields of Korea; on  
those mountains and in those valleys,  
old blood had not yet dried before  
new blood drenched them again; after  
the B-29's had gone over, they left  
babies lying on the mangled bodies  
of their mothers, sucking the breasts  
that gave but blood;

on the borders of the Han River  
on the middle of steep mountain ranges  
the people of Korea sweep forward  
like a tidal wave; guerrillas  
from the wild vegetation, springing  
into being, looking at you, and firing;  
peasants  
carrying spades to beat out  
your brains;

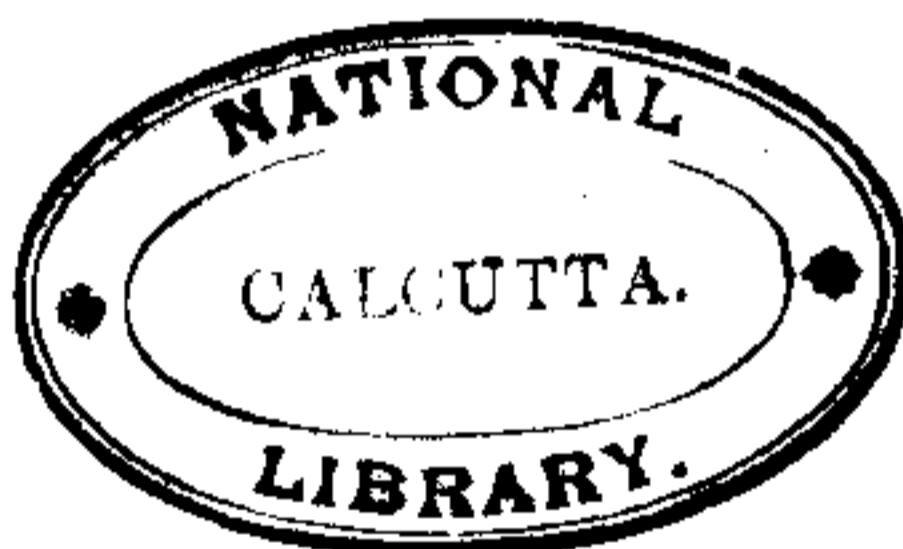
“people”—  
in the army textbook of Truman  
the word does not exist;  
but here are the people, and  
just yesterday they were signing  
the peace petition; while today



Weaving

by Chiao Ping-cheng

華華  
時態尚新巧  
女工慕精勤  
心手暗相應  
照眼華紛紛  
殷勤拋錦字  
曲折續回文  
更持無限思  
織作雁背雲



Like WINNOWING, WEAVING is another piece taken from the series of drawings by Chiao Ping-cheng, a court artist of the 17th century.

they stand in front of the aggressors  
levelling their automatic rifles; now  
the people are giving Truman  
two roads; one, to surrender to peace  
or two, to stand in the courts  
bending his head as a war criminal; this  
the people solemnly proclaim  
to the whole world; whoever cannot hear  
this sound, will be burnt in the flames  
that have been raised;

we will not permit war;  
on the docks of San Francisco  
seeing off husbands and sons  
there is weeping everywhere;

we will not permit war;  
still many children wake from dreams  
thinking they hear the sound of Hitler  
bombers;

we will not permit war;  
the Marshall Plan that consumes peoples,  
the organization of Joint Chiefs of Staff,  
these must be thrown out; all American  
soldiers, together with the flag of U.N.O.  
stolen from Lake Success, must, too, be cleared  
from Korea;  
the Seventh Fleet of the U.S.A.  
must be cleared from Taiwan;

we will not permit war;  
the Korean government radio  
has sent to all the peoples of the world  
messages from the prisoners of war;

American soldiers in Japan, in  
ever-increasing groups, are deserting;

we will not permit war;  
preserving with all our might  
our warm ties of friendship  
our fun together  
at Saturday night dances; the success of  
our factories  
our farms  
our schools  
our theatres;

we will not permit war;  
the Tania classes in our schools  
must go on through all their grades;  
and a Liu Hu-lan stay with us still  
and be a model worker; our People's  
Liberation Army taking part  
in production;

we will not permit war;  
the people have chosen tractors and sheaves of wheat;  
not atom bombs and Colorado beetles;

we will not permit war;  
let Truman and Churchill tremble  
in front of the great sound of peace;  
their wild persecution cannot hide the fact  
that in reality they are so weak;  
in front of the Ku Klux Klan, and police  
in front of tear gas and armoured cars  
peace fighters  
raise higher your banners  
and save peace;

you who in New York  
had your eye so injured;  
when you were in the hospital  
the people learnt your name  
because you worked to protect  
peace;

you girl students of Damascus,  
taken to police headquarters  
holding in your hands the peace  
petition; now because of this,  
will this petition be passed on  
to the many;

mothers of Vienna, standing in front  
of the American Embassy, and then  
hurried off to jail; your example  
was taken by the mothers of Paris;  
the same action, the same slogans;

peace leaders of Ankara, when you  
were investigated by military tribunal,  
in the cities and villages of Turkey  
peace organizations came up, like  
flowers in the spring. Peace fighters,  
come to the struggle  
still more brave  
using the name of peace  
fighting against war;

#### IV

the people's eyes  
turn to the USSR  
like those in a drought

looking at the rainbow in the sky;  
the Soviet banners  
firing the will of all men for struggle,  
the sound of the great bell of the Kremlin  
encouraging, giving confidence to all peoples  
thirsting for peace; let  
the war-mongers remember the lessons  
of history; over this bit of ancient ground  
the armies of ancient Sweden swept like  
a tide;  
but the failure of Charles XII was like  
the ebbing tide; a tide that left  
instead of sea shells, a myriad bones  
from the rotting corpses  
of enemy soldiers;

Napoleon stood on the top of the Alps  
amongst the clouds; but on the snow-  
swept plains of Russia his great armies  
were defeated and lost;

hai!  
these old bits of history  
Hitler forgot;  
but Hitler's defeat should surely  
be still fresh in memory today;  
Soviet heroes stand in the front  
ranks of peace fighters; yet whoever  
dares to try and come from the East,  
the forests of Siberia will be  
their graveyard; whoever from the West  
shall be drowned in the Baltic sea;

the Soviet land  
is soaked with the fresh blood  
of aggression and with the blood

of her youthful heroes; the interventionists of twenty-four countries once rained down their munitions on the newly-formed Republic; in the same way fascist bandits poured destruction over the USSR; yet today, as high as the Urals are stacked not weapons but great stores of grain;

let Truman and Churchill remember that from the day of Tsaritsyn to the day of Stalingrad the Soviet people have defeated all aggressors; and should some other wild beast dare attack us he too will be firmly, completely crushed;

let those who would make war think over these lessons; let them learn from Stalingrad, that city of flesh and blood, of steel and iron, of heroes, of dauntless inhabitants;

the heroes of Stalingrad have already doffed uniforms, returned to their homes; Major Shapilov has not really died at all he has gone back to his school to be a teacher of history, taking his wife Anya; when the moon comes over the tops of the trees these two walk under the bright lights of street lamps to see the ballet they call "Swan Lake"; and the Volga River runs along noiselessly; let this Volga be the witness

of all that has passed; the Stakhanov heroes who took up their rifles and rallied to the defence of Stalingrad, the Youth Vanguard members who stood without fear in front of the machine guns of German fascists, singing the International; a people who when peace came turned to the construction of their own cities; all peoples in the world have heard this sound coming from the soil of the Soviet land—the sound of motors in the factories, of tractors on the farms, of work for the new life of everyone;

let peace come to the workers,  
to the Volga River  
and to all those places  
it passes;

let peace come to Kubishev  
and the hydro-electric works of Stalingrad;  
let peace give warmth and light  
to the city and to the village bringing  
to the people all good things;

## v

ah!

Once again this day, I am so excited reading the news release from Moscow wanting to run up the street, shouting to the whole city in the night, to awaken people tired with the work of their day having them understand the news from the Dneiper River hydro-electric job the Ukraine Crimean canal, and irrigation projects; that they will be as happy

as am I, it is sure; for the people here have already consigned their bitterness to history; have brought sweat and creativeness to the fore; for our four hundred and seventy million people are also following the road of labour constructing their young Republic's future.

Let the enemy stand in front of us and tremble; our friends stand with us clapping and shouting with happiness; over our land all manner of overwhelming things are happening; last year, it was the founding of our People's Republic, announcing the bankruptcy of war in the Far East; now the peace-loving peoples of the world welcome their brothers who stand on one quarter of its surface, with flowers and words of cheer;

our country is like the rays of the sun that rises in the east rays that penetrate so far; I love my country, for she has suffered so much she is so beautiful her future is so great the sun shines so warmly and we have come through the chill of so dark a night; so are our people happy in having surmounted so many troubles;

in my old village, droughts followed floods; the people

ate bark of trees and roots,  
and after that ate white clay;  
having eaten the white clay  
ate the dead bodies of famine sufferers;  
eighteen or nineteen-year-old girls  
sold  
their virginity for the price of one catty  
of potato; old people died  
with no coffins to bury them;  
youth ran away from the villages,  
from the cities to the coast, given  
curse words instead of names; jammed  
into fourth-class on ships flying  
British and American flags, bound  
for the South Seas and San Francisco;  
flesh and blood used up on rubber plantation  
and in gold mine, everywhere  
dying quietly, unknown.

Over the surface of our harbours and rivers  
lay Japanese warships as many as yellow  
fish; while through the days the booted feet  
of their infantry stamped over our streets,  
and through the nights there came the rattle  
of prisoners' chains; when my young sister  
wept at night, my mother hit the end of the bed  
telling her that the Japanese had come,  
frightening her so much she could scarcely  
open her mouth; each day I feared to walk  
to school past the Japanese consulate, dreading  
the wild kids who would chase us  
from there, jabbing us in the stomach  
with penknives; then when at last Japanese  
warships left, there came back in their place  
the Americans;

just on that night  
when we heard of the final surrender  
of Japan, there came drunken American  
sailors using whiskey bottles, braining  
two rickshaw pullers; and from then on  
American armoured cars sped regardless  
down all our streets;

in this terrible era  
when I had looked for light to come back  
to the hills and valleys of our motherland  
all I could see were more and more  
American warships floating in the river;  
American planes darkened the sky over  
Peking and there in the snow one night  
Kuomintang police extorted money from a girl  
just raped by an American soldier;

then at the pass of Chu Yung Kuan by the Great Wall  
swung the heads of two people; on the banks  
of the vast Yangtse many patriots  
were stuffed into bags and tossed into  
the waters; and in my native village  
the kids of ten years ago who had dared  
to throw stones at the Japanese boys  
had grown up and become guerrillas in the  
hills;

ah!  
My country!  
Your rivers and streams are filled with the blood  
of your people;  
your green hills cover the bones of the soldiers  
who have fought for you;

the soil that has been soaked with  
the blood of your sons and daughters,  
has already come into flower with  
scarlet blooms; your long night has  
already passed, and your today is warm  
and mild; I wish I could live  
a hundred years, watching my motherland  
grow greater year by year; but I can also  
die in the struggle for her this afternoon  
should this morning there be an enemy attack;

our peoples have always  
loved the hammer and sickle;  
whoever forces them to take up arms,  
will find them to be as brave as tigers;  
we want peace  
not that we are weak,  
but rather because we are tough;  
yesterday's slaves have turned over;  
whoever dares strike one blow  
against our motherland, courts death;  
in front of her  
any enemy must accept defeat,  
all wild attempts at aggression  
will be halted;

my country  
I am so proud to carry your name  
to be one of so invincible  
a people; wondering now in sorrow  
why did my parents leave you  
in their youth, giving birth to me  
in a foreign land; yet grateful  
to them that they bore me for the era  
of Mao Tse-tung, so that I could advance  
with all our people, making our country-side

more beautiful to hand on to  
following generations;

ah my country!

Your children are like young eagles  
watching your borders from the sea-shores  
so that the newly cultivated farms  
may grow in peace; and industry come  
to new life;

now we would regret the breaking of even  
one bit of glass belonging to the public;  
is it likely that we would permit  
robbers to reduce our villages and cities  
to ashes?

Our Chao Kuei-lan  
working with hazardous materials  
let her hand be shattered to save  
a people's factory; our peasants  
after Land Reform are celebrating  
their bumper crops; our People's  
Liberation Army take up pens and shovels  
as well as rifles; our railways  
stretch from the Soviet border at Manchuli  
down to the south coast at Canton; our new bridge  
will span the Yangtse River from Hankow  
to Wuchang;

brothers and sisters, redouble our efforts!  
the R.P.M. of each machine  
the grain from each ear of wheat  
springing up to life again;  
the running of each express train  
the sailing of each ship,  
each work-worn hand

each drop of sweat from a toiler's head—  
all these are contributions  
to peace;

for myself I can only  
write articles for papers;  
I'll bring notice to the fact  
that thirteen years of inflation has  
been halted; the industrial output  
of the Northeast has increased  
sixfold; that all over the country  
there are record harvests; that  
the children of workers and peasants  
go to school; write headlines  
on the work of people, people's creativeness,  
filling up my paper with this,  
letting it circulate through the world  
making the enemy tremble  
and friends rejoice;  
these things I do, for adding  
all such news together, their sum total  
spells just one thing—  
peace;  
and though I have never been able  
to sing, now would I for ever chant  
the strongest of all notes, that  
of peace.

*LI TIEN-MIN*

## FOR PEACE

### I

No matter if you are  
man or woman, an  
old man or a kid,  
a worker, a farmer,  
a soldier, a student  
or a trader;

nor does it matter  
what are your political beliefs  
or your religious ones;

if you are asked, what is the first essential  
for mankind? You must answer

firstly,  
secondly,  
lastly,  
PEACE!

That is, unless you are tied up with  
some reactionary gang, or unless  
you are a lunatic.

Yes,  
you  
I  
he

all of us; every decent understanding person  
must want peace; all love peace, loving it  
as much as they love their own eyes;

so to decide  
whether or not peace  
is a good or a bad thing  
we don't need a meeting

or an investigation  
or popular vote  
or a debate with each side  
getting red in the face;  
everyone

will agree  
that all people must support  
the cause of peace.

## II

Our children  
like sweet things to eat  
and our elders at New Year like  
to stick up great red mottoes  
such as: "Peace through the Four Seasons,"

peasants  
in the country, have their saying  
"Gentle Winds, Plenty of Rain,"  
or "A Good Harvest for our Grain,"

old scholars  
would write for theirs:  
"Peace is a Precious Thing,"

traders  
like grand ones, with the words  
“Peace breeds Prosperity,”

the old-time gentry—  
“A Gentleman uses his Voice  
The Small Man, his Hands.”

even the old-fashioned mothers  
and grandmothers, going through  
all their ceremony, burning incense  
praying to Buddha; they surely mean  
what they say in their incantations

“Bring relief to the miserable,  
to all under heaven, Peace!”

Everyone knows  
everyone has experienced  
that war is bitter,  
peace is sweet; this  
is the simplest knowledge;  
there is a good old proverb that says,

“No good mouth curses people,  
no good hand beats men.”

If one fights  
one must swing swords,  
point rifles; if  
you are not wounded  
you are killed;

yet what child is there  
whose parents will not change  
his napkins, see to his wetting,

bring him up through  
all difficulties, who would not  
want him to live peacefully, grow up  
well and strong?

### III

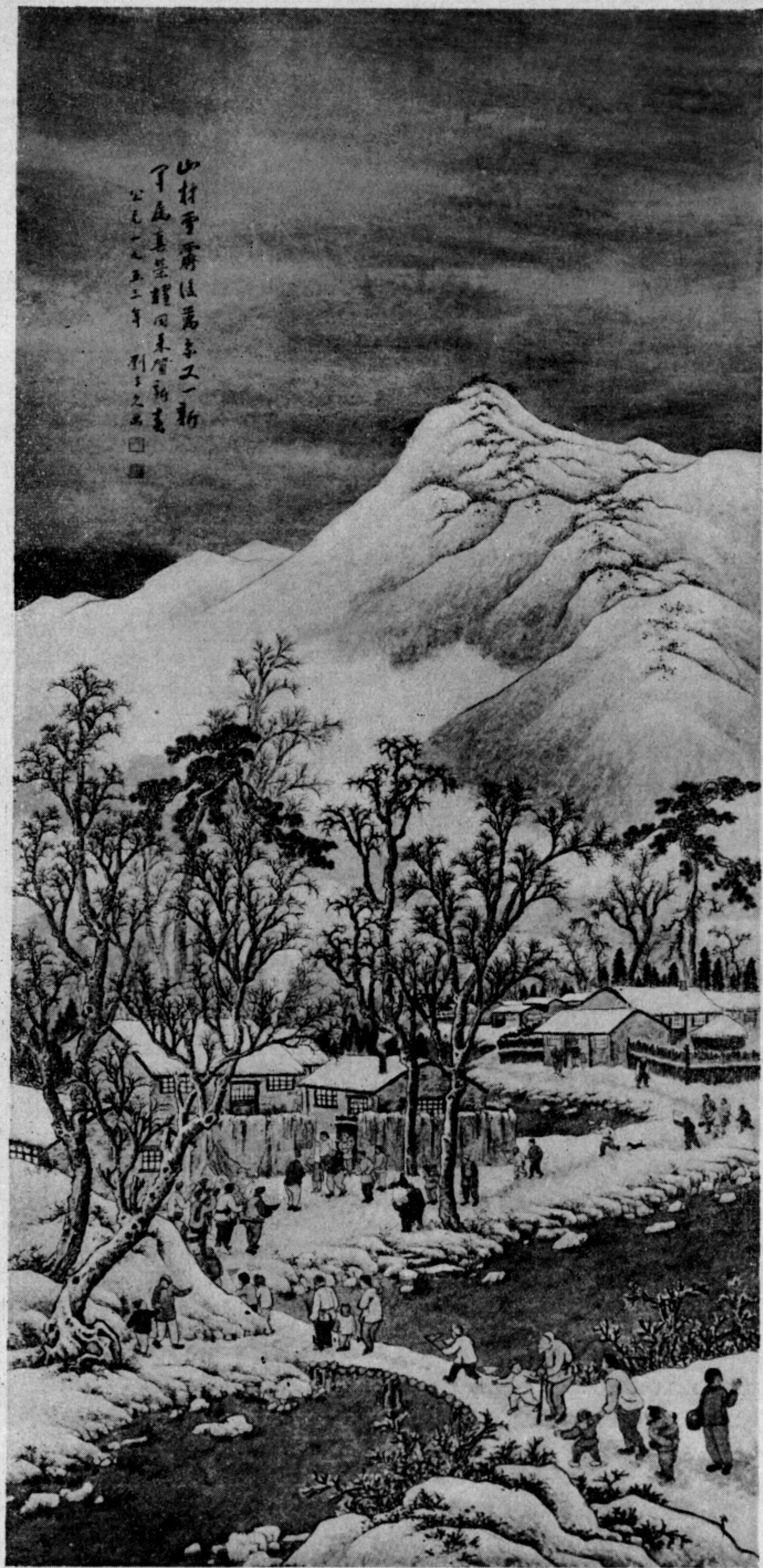
Sure  
we want peace.  
For peace, our pitiful ancestors  
prayed to Buddha, besought  
Kuan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy;  
beat their heads on stones  
voicing this the greatest of desires,  
burning so many sticks of incense  
reading so many sutras; yet still  
troubles beset them, still  
they could not move  
those

old Lords of Heaven,  
or God; never did

happy relief come  
from the bitterness around them;  
all they got was still

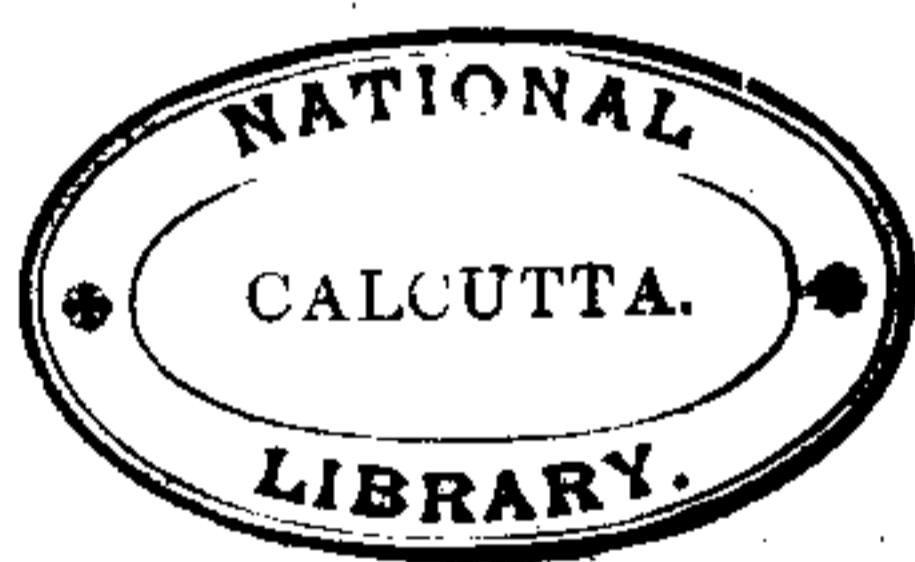
famines,  
contagious disease,  
disasters of war  
and ever poverty.

If  
you say they were stupid  
and had no real knowledge,



Calling on Army Dependents During the  
New Year Festival

by Liu Tze-chiu



*This is the work of a contemporary artist  
who uses the traditional technique to express a  
new content and new theme.*

I agree;  
all this was the fault of rulers  
the tyrants of the old days who governed  
with swords, guns and whips; "Peace"—who  
dared then to murmur the word?

For peace  
our beloved ancestors longed  
from one generation to another  
through all their trouble-filled days;  
not knowing why they were born, or  
why they died, being  
obedient slaves, they created  
obedient slave children:  
living all were slaves; dead  
all went down the steps to Hades;  
how many of them  
in all the old wars were killed  
and passed into oblivion; how  
many people were cut off before  
they had lived through their years;

in famines,  
in plagues,  
in great disasters of war;  
great chains ever pressing  
on their necks.

For peace  
our respected ancestors longed  
they found it not sweet

to be used as cattle  
or horses; not sweet  
to be killed; so

they have already  
risen many times  
to resist, to struggle  
in peasant revolts  
that spread like wildfire:  
all over China they caught alight  
so that the old feudalists  
used all the strength of their soldiers  
and all their cunning arguments  
to hold their position; yet  
those who did not want to be slaves  
those who would raise the rest up,  
their blood ran freely; those who fell  
replaced by those who came on from behind.

And why  
did they do all this?  
Because

they would live like men,  
living, holding  
peace.

#### IV

And now  
let us look at a little of the blood  
that has dripped down  
through history.

As we turn the pages  
the word "war"  
comes often, too often to count.

Every page  
of history is well dyed  
with the fresh blood of the people.  
Five thousand years make  
fifty centuries—a long  
dark night!  
our people have had their bones  
ground under the heel  
of feudalism; with all  
those rotten emperors, nobles, landlords  
riding on the neck of the people  
riding them like horses.

War?  
Every year there was war;  
peace?  
Where could it be found?

## V

1840—  
an unforgettable year  
coming in with opium,  
pirates, imperialism—  
ta madi!\*

one  
two  
three  
four

England, France, Japan, America;

they kicked open  
the door of China

\*Common cuss-word.

letting in their military adventurers  
striking their roots in our land  
planting us under their great bottoms,  
treating us as slaves; making themselves  
into the masters; this  
shall we never forget;

1857 the Franco-British Army entered Peking;  
1884 the Sino-French War;  
1894 the Sino-Japanese War;  
1900 the combined army of eight nations entered  
Peking.

Like a revolving lamp  
with pictures painted upon it  
each picture returning  
with the defeated always China;  
praying for mercy, humbly  
bowing; the victors always  
demanding indemnities from us;  
imperialisms following each other  
each more fierce  
than the last;

but of them all  
America the most treacherous  
the most cunning with great talk  
of equal rights for all, the "open  
door" policy; wearing a deceitful smile,  
always profiting—  
but in which of the aggressive wars  
did she not take part? And were not her  
underhand dealings more mean, more cruel  
than the rest of the gang?

So was our country  
in a pitiful state;

for from that time and for  
a hundred years thence, she  
could not lift her head; there  
was a hundred years of a China  
turned into an adventurers' paradise  
become a field of plunder for robbers,  
making endless shameful agreements,  
treaties; which became like paper seals  
pasted over our entrance door, with  
the robbers guarding the door itself;  
opening their great jaws,  
sucking up our blood  
using knives to hack off our flesh.

Why,  
those people

when they chewed a thing up,  
everything was eaten; they didn't even  
spit up the bones; and those hateful  
confused,  
incapable emperors;  
and all those treacherous slave ministers  
all those under the booted heel  
of the robbers, bent low;

they threw away the property of our ancestors  
trying to buy cheap security with submission  
a submission that simply brought more wars.  
With the people, suffering more than ever,  
having their lives consumed in war.

Then came the revolution of 1911 and war again;  
the dragon flag

changed to the five-coloured one,  
then the five-coloured one gave way  
to that of the blue sky and the white sun.

When the people had just cut off  
their pigtails; and from the dark night  
had just begun to see a little light; then  
they slipped back into civil war; with  
imperialisms sending in munitions, frightened  
that the Chinese people themselves  
would stand up; imperialisms planning  
their own policy secretly, making it so  
that all the war-lords were at each other's  
throats continually; fighting here,  
fighting there; fighting so that  
the whole country stank of war; everywhere  
the sound of war; and China became  
a football ground

with the skulls of men as footballs  
through all those dreadful years;  
with the people, above all, wishing  
for peace, yet getting  
incessant  
continual  
disasters of famine  
of misery  
and of war.

## VII

Chiang Kai-shek  
the greatest traitor of our country  
the greatest loafer, who rose by  
betraying the revolution,  
again started the cycle of civil war  
to hold back a people's revolution.

Chiang in direct line  
of succession to Yuan Shih-kai\*  
attempting to become emperor;  
Chiang who caused  
ten more years of civil war,  
killing how many millions?  
Chiang whose fist smashed peace—  
the 18th of September, 1931\*\*

and Chiang  
sold out the Northeast  
affecting some thirty million people,  
placing them under the iron heel  
of the Japanese bandits; for fifteen years  
making them the oxen, the horses  
for Japan.

Now the sound of guns at Lukouchiao\*\*\*  
with Japanese imperialism as a hungry wolf  
carrying on the policy of Meiji,\*\*\*\* thinking—

\*Yuan Shih-kai, feudal militarist who on the collapse of the Manchu dynasty got himself made president of the newly established Republic in 1912 and tried without success to become emperor.

\*\*September 18, 1931, the Japanese imperialists seized Northeast China and set up the puppet state of Manchukuo.

\*\*\*Lukouchiao, the "Marco Polo Bridge" near Peking where on July 7, 1937 the Chinese army met and pushed back the Japanese and the War of Resistance started.

\*\*\*\*Meiji, the reign of the Japanese emperor of that name who

now is the time to take all of China, in  
one great gulp;

then Chiang Kai-shek  
Wang Ching-wei\*

one pair of trousers  
with two legs

one a traitor  
the other a robber who sells his country,  
one who went over to the enemy  
the other who would not fight, but retreated  
in front of the enemy.

And still the suffering people of China  
toiled on through all kinds of hardships,  
deprivations, misery....

How many of us have been lost?  
Our dear sons and daughters;  
how many lovely and fragrant children,  
how much of our property, our fertile lands,  
our gardens, reduced to dust?

How many widows and orphans  
through all the country wandered  
homeless? Who can give a reckoning  
of all this bloodshed, this endless  
hatred? How shall we balance  
accounts?

\*Wang Ching-wei, the Kuomintang leader who went over to the Japanese in 1938 and became head of their puppet government in Nanking.

This we know

our enemies are the imperialists—  
Chiang's gang, robbers—and even if these  
run to the four corners of the earth  
they will not escape our punishment.

## VIII

1945—

the Japanese robbers have submitted  
and all welcome peace—the peace  
all have awaited so eagerly;  
the Chinese people all want to breathe  
fresh air, to peacefully recuperate;

but Chiang Kai-shek  
that rotten egg, had  
another plan, a plan  
against the wishes  
of our people; so again

started civil war wishing to swallow up all  
the fruits of victory and throw  
the people aside;

and steadily encroached  
American imperialism, full  
of secret plans and false talks  
for settlement, behind the scenes;  
always  
supporting Chiang Kai-shek  
backing him in civil war  
thinking to use him to annihilate  
the Communist Party; then could America

stand on China and prepare  
a third world war.

## IX

But the eyes of the Chinese people  
now were crystal clear; fully did  
they understand these secret plans;  
the Chinese Communist Party  
led the people to rise and protect  
the peace of liberated areas  
throwing out all dark measures  
for repression; so that after three years  
of the war of liberation, this old China  
turned over its great body  
and changed to meet the new day.

Ha! Ha!

a beautiful, clear day,  
and for the evidence that it was good  
there was the happiness and joy of the people  
to see.

The Liberation Army  
of the Chinese people, was like  
a great broom, cleansing; throwing  
reactionaries, imperialists,  
all sorts of corrupt people  
out of China.

See!

The red flag of China with its five-pointed stars  
how beautiful, how fiery!

New China  
like the sun at dawn coming out

of the black night; now like  
a huge giant, full of spirit  
full of youthful energy, suddenly  
become a great force in Asia.

The thousand years of anger  
got rid of; the recent  
years of bitterness, spat out;  
a century of rape and oppression  
rubbed off the slate.

Now  
called by their proper name  
the people  
become the masters of the Chinese People's Republic.

Not thanking heaven  
nor thanking the earth  
but thanking  
our liberating star  
Chairman Mao Tse-tung.  
Beat our drums,  
clash our cymbals,  
thank our elder brother—  
the Soviet Union!

We put all our strength  
into our changing; the yellow earth  
has turned to gold; a river  
frozen for a thousand years  
has started to flow; what fish  
can swim against the current?

Ancient trees  
come out in flower;  
the workers themselves  
become masters.

And for happiness?  
It beckons to us  
days of peace  
are in front of our eyes.

There are those who say  
we should make the new China  
into a beautiful garden;  
no!

We shall make China  
like a great heaven in front  
of the people; not a place  
up in the sky, but one  
right in the hands of our workers;  
and if you do not believe  
look!

The Soviet Union is our model,

the Communist Party is our mother, with great  
ability, and  
strength  
bringing to us

those things we have never had,  
food that is sweet,  
peace.

And wherever she goes  
there is brightness;  
moreover she can lead  
the people; take our  
five thousand year old culture  
and forge it into a free,  
democratic  
united  
independent country.

It is as though we have suddenly  
discovered our country, the land  
of our ancestors; now so lovable  
so beautiful!

## X

But  
dogs, don't you forget,  
eat offal;  
cats, don't you forget,  
try to grab fish;  
Chiang Kai-shek, don't you forget,  
is still not dead.

He, with his gang of scamps,  
still thinks he can land again  
on the continent; return to be  
king again; the imperialist  
makers of war, in spite of their defeats  
still have not had a big enough lesson  
from the powerful fists of the Chinese people.

We want peace,  
they want war;  
they think to use war to extend  
their useless dogs' lives;  
we go through days of peace  
while they die of jealousy  
they would throw sand in our cooking-pot;  
we want to construct  
they want to destroy; thinking  
that if they can keep us backward  
they can make money out of us.

The American robbers  
we have just thrown out  
still hang to the Korean coast  
helping that dog, Syngman Rhee,  
starting a disastrous civil war  
in order to protect the puppet gentry;  
openly they have sent their army  
to fight an aggressive war; then again  
have they stood on our Taiwan; so  
does the enemy try to do the impossible  
pulling up out of the past the policy  
of the Tanaka Memorial, turning  
history upside down  
still thinking to do  
what Imperial Japan could not do,  
still thinking  
enough panic can be raised  
to precipitate a third world war;  
reaching out two great hairy hands  
from Washington, bloody hands  
one to grasp Asia,  
one to hold Europe—  
afterwards to use these hands together.

Okay,  
one plus one makes three;  
clever guys;  
they dream, the big bosses of Wall Street  
they dream  
that all the gold of the world  
can make a mountain, and then  
that mountain will become  
their property; all the people  
of the world will become  
their slaves; with their president

a leader of slaves;  
what a nerve!

## XI

A pity those fellows  
have more ambition than ability;  
their arms are too short,  
like Wu Ta Lang's,\*  
reaching for the bar to grasp  
those above and below,  
he could not make it;  
failing in both directions  
falling down in the mud of Korea;

China and Korea,  
for all these years  
beside each other in their troubles.

Of course when one has a fire  
the other has to take notice,  
of course when robbers enter  
we cannot stand with our hands  
in our sleeves.

Today  
Korea and China  
are fighting one enemy,  
just as are the lovers of peace all over the world.

We have one slogan  
rising with one sound

\*Wu Ta Lang, Chinese legendary figure who could not reach up  
and could not reach down when he got into difficulty.

everywhere,  
listen to it,

“WE ARE AGAINST AGGRESSIVE WAR  
PROTECT THE PEACE OF THE WORLD”

## XII

Yes,  
the Chinese people,  
the Korean people,  
with all the peoples of the world,  
love peace;

but do not think  
that because we love peace  
we will put up with anything;  
no!

On the contrary; for today  
is not 1840, nor is it 1900; China  
is no longer “the sick man of Asia”; today  
our working people are supreme masters of the land  
never shall we return to the time  
when we bowed our heads to the imperialists;  
let Chiang Kai-shek run to his adopted father  
and bow! As for us  
never again shall we ask anything from imperialism.

Let American generals teach their men  
how to surrender; we, as free men,  
have thrown off our fetters; we will not  
be cowed again.

We know  
that war is cruel and ruthless,

that war takes away our strength;  
peace  
we recognize as our first great need;  
yet we,  
though we so warmly love peace, we never have been  
frightened of war, and moreover  
will never be: for we know  
that he who would smash our aspirations for peace  
he is the enemy  
he is the war criminal; so  
there is no question that we  
shall use arms to protect  
the peace of mankind, and if need be  
fight that last fight

for  
the lasting generations to come

for  
the everlasting peace of the world.



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